

Hitler's Third Reich – Issue 8

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HITLER'S

Third Reich

Volume

8

Monthly

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HITLER'S Third Reich

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SECRET HITLER FILES



Hitler's Women

Hitler's love life has been the subject of intense speculation in the half century since his death. Very little is known about his habits, but it is clear that his relationships with women were far from normal.

Hitler poses at Berchtesgaden with his mistress Eva Braun. Even though she became his wife in the Führerbunker just hours before they committed suicide, very few Germans were even aware of her existence.



POLITICAL POWER is a turn-on. Even the limited authority of a present-day cabinet minister has been enough to convert some very unprepossessing men into sexual tyrannosaurs. If some of the less attractive of modern cabinet ministers can be so transformed by the trappings of office, then what opportunities awaited the dictator of Nazi Germany! He had total control of the media and the world's most feared secret police; he also had a taste for jackboots, whips, leather coats and fast cars. No wonder people gossiped. According to popular rumours during the 1930s, Hitler's conquests were not limited to minor countries in central Europe. He was Don Juan in a brown shirt.

Hitler the Charmer

Hitler affected an old-fashioned Viennese charm. It worked wonders on the wives of industrialists and bankers with whom he curried favour during the 1920s. It was so at odds with his image as a street fighter, such a contrast with his rabid street oratory. Surely someone who kissed the ladies' hands with such elegance must be socially acceptable.

Perhaps the first lady to be so impressed was Helene Bechstein, wife of Carl Bechstein the piano manufacturer. She gave Hitler large sums of cash and even contributed some of her jewelry to Nazi funds in 1922-3. She was old enough to pretend to be his mother and so be able to visit him in Landsberg prison. After his release, she continued to introduce him to the upper echelons of society, politicians and businessmen who might be sympathetic or useful to the Nazi movement.

The Bechsteins' housekeeper in Obersalzberg alleged that Hitler often stayed overnight when Carl Bechstein was away in Berlin; the couple slept in the same room behind a locked door.



Above: In many ways the most important woman in Hitler's life was his mother, Klara. The young Adolf was very much a mother's boy, and her painful death from cancer in 1907 had a devastating effect on the future dictator.

There were other older women. Elsa Bruckmann was a Romanian princess married to the owner of a Munich publishing house. She also introduced him to potential allies among the political elite, and helped polish his provincial manners. Nor was she the only aristocrat to fall under the spell of those blue eyes.

Swedish princess Ann Mari von Bismarck, married to Germany's ambassador in Italy, allegedly slept with him in Berlin. Count Ciano, Mussolini's foreign minister and son-in-law, thought another German aristocratic wife, Sigrid von Lappus was Hitler's mistress. Others believed fellow Italian countess Maria Magistrati had the honour.

Younger women could be politically useful too. Winifred Wagner was the wife of the famous composer's only son. They met at the 1923 Bayreuth festival: he was 34; she was 26. She became an ardent supporter, her devotion life-long, and Hitler was a frequent visitor to the Wagners' house. Again, his visits tended to coincide with the husband's absence and they became even more regular after Siegfried's death in 1930. As late as an interview in 1975 she said would be glad to see Hitler again. The Holocaust, she claimed, was organized by the likes of Streicher, probably without the Führer's knowledge.

Political cover-up

Sexual allure can help a political figure charm his or her way into office and bedroom alike. But a powerful sex drive can destroy the greatest political careers. Hitler was linked to a succession of women with whom a sexual relationship, if exposed, could have seriously compromised his chances of gaining power. The most notorious was Geli Raubal, his young niece. There is no doubt that his feelings for her were truly passionate; for a brief period his monumental ego was focussed on someone other than himself. The very intensity of his passion led him to closet her, suffocate the spirit he so admired and eventually drive her to suicide. There is every likelihood that they were lovers, and talk of their incestuous relationship was vigorously

Below left: Hitler was fond of nudes, especially of 'Germanic' women. His niece and mistress Geli Raubal is thought to have posed for this painting by leading Nazi artist Adolph Ziegler.

Below: Hitler was a devotee of the music of Richard Wagner, and the Wagner family reciprocated that regard. He was a regular guest at Haus Wahnfried, the Wagner home at Bayreuth. Winifred Wagner, the composer's English-born daughter-in-law, was one of the Führer's most devoted followers.





Left: Born in Berlin in 1902, Leni Riefenstahl was a dancer before a knee injury ended her career. She became an actress, and starred in three very popular outdoor films set in the Alps. She directed the third film, and an admirer asked her to direct a film for him. The admirer was Adolf Hitler, and the film was 'Triumph of the Will'.

Hitler's Film-maker

ONE YOUNG woman was pivotal to Hitler's success. When a film called 'Triumph of the Will' premiered in Berlin on 28 March 1935, Hitler walked to the front of the cinema to kiss the hand of a beautiful woman whose plunging neckline left little to the imagination. Leni Riefenstahl was a famous actress turned director, whose accomplishments represent a genuine landmark in cinematography.

Like Albert Speer, she devoted great talent to an unworthy cause, and was rarely given the opportunity to work again after

1945. But ten years earlier there was no doubting her very public relationship with Adolf Hitler. According to a member of the Reich film chamber, when Hitler watched the prologue of her film on the Berlin Olympics, which features a number of female nudes, he exclaimed 'Leni' at the sight of a naked woman seen from behind. 'If he recognized her from the rear,' he observed, 'he must have been a very good friend of hers'.



Leni Riefenstahl talks with Reich Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels. Although Goebbels was responsible for approving all German film-making, Riefenstahl's closeness to Hitler meant that she suffered from minimal bureaucratic interference.



Left: Leni Riefenstahl marshals her assistants during the making of 'Triumph of the Will'. One of the most effective propaganda films of all time, it depicted the Führer as a Wagnerian hero.





ADOLF AND EVA

SOME FORMER members of Hitler's inner circle have claimed Eva Braun endured weird sex with Hitler. But two perceptive observers, Albert Speer and the special forces commander Otto Skorzeny, detected nothing perverse in the relationship. Yet it was an affair that withered as the war turned sour after 1941. It seems unlikely that they slept together after that. Eva told several confidantes, including her sister Gretl, that Hitler had told her to expect nothing from him.

Other observers thought that the hard-drinking SS lothario Hermann Fegelein, married to Gretl, was actually carrying on with Eva. In Berlin during the latter half of 1944, with Gretl at home expecting his child, he certainly had the opportunity. If true, it certainly provides another motive for his execution, at Hitler's orders, in the Chancellery garden in the last hours of the war.



Above: Eva Braun was a simple, earthy girl who loved animals. Hitler was comfortable with her, but there is no evidence that he felt anything like the passionate obsession he had for his niece, Geli Raubal.

suppressed. Two men who squashed the story rose to be the Bavarian chief justice and head of the Berlin Gestapo respectively.

In the late 1920s Hitler pursued a 16-year old girl called Mimi Reiter. They met in a park when walking their dogs, and soon the Nazi leader was paying court: a 37-year old man donning leathers and brandishing a dogwhip to date a teenage girl. To her he was 'Wolf'; she was his 'woodland sprite'. It began with walks in the woods and ended with nude swimming (her only – Hitler's interest was voyeuristic). She hanged herself, but was cut down in time and later married a local hotelier. Even then, she claimed to have slept with Hitler at his demand later in the 1930s. The normally prudish Rudolf Hess was reportedly sent to fetch her to Hitler's Prinzregenplatz apartment in Munich, but who took her home in the morning is not recorded.

Suicides

Mimi was saved, but Geli Raubal died from a gunshot wound, probably self-inflicted but conceivably by Hitler's own hand. So did a young woman called Suzi Liptauer, reportedly after a brief fling with the Führer. Renate Müller was a young actress Hitler met on a film set in 1932. Hitler invited her to the Chancellery and dated her on and off over the

Right: Unity Mitford was a tall blonde English aristocrat, whose sister Diana married British Fascist leader Oswald Mosely. In 1938 she went to Munich to meet her hero, Adolf Hitler. The Führer thought of the Mitford girls as fine examples of Aryan womanhood, and Unity was soon a member of Hitler's inner circle. She tried to kill herself when war broke out

next few years, but in 1936 it was announced that 30-year-old Renate had died of a heart attack. In fact, she had jumped to her death from the window of a sanatorium where she was being treated for morphine addiction.

Hitler's most famous mistress – although not known outside his inner circle until after the war – was Eva Braun. By the time Renate Müller leapt from the window, Eva had already made two suicide attempts, acts of desperation calculated to regain Hitler's attention. She shot herself in November 1932 and took an overdose in May 1935.

Unity Mitford, Hitler's most passionate English advocate shot herself when

war was declared in 1939. Inge Ley, wife of Robert Ley, head of the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, so preferred the Führer to her alcoholic husband that she killed herself when Hitler was unmoved by her advances.

Magda Goebbels was another unrequited love: married to the priapic propaganda chief, she was desperately in love with Adolf Hitler. "I can hear her ovaries rattle when she's near him," Martin Bormann crudely observed. She committed suicide in the *Führerbunker* after killing her six children, sacrificing her offspring on Hitler's funeral pyre.

Weird sex

After the war Mimi Rieter claimed Hitler's sexual tastes were too extreme. Winifred Wagner's doctor told US Army investigators that she said she was frightened to be alone with him. Frau Wagner's daughter Friedelind said her mother was disgusted by the man – she claimed that he liked to be whipped. Renate Müller told a similar story to film director Adolf Ziesler: Hitler, she said, preferred her to kick him while he masturbated. And there was Geli's reported lament that her uncle would rather sit under her while she urinated. Other rather unreliable witnesses also suggested that sadistic impulses drew him: an SS officer claimed that they stretched young women naked across a vaulting horse in the basement of his house on the Obersalzberg, where Hitler joined in gang rapes.

Below: Unhappy in her own marriage, Magda Goebbels was another woman who was devoted to Hitler. Magda accompanied her husband to the Führerbunker at the end of the war. There she declared that without Hitler there was no future. After Adolf and Eva committed suicide, she killed her own children before joining her beloved Führer in death.



Hitler:

Sexual Deviant or Asexual neuter?

THE STORIES of Hitler's affairs, above all his perverted sexual tastes are mostly based on US intelligence reports written during the war. Much of the material is based on the feverish imagination of Hitler's arch enemy, Otto Strasser, the Nazi renegade whose brother Gregor Hitler had murdered. Strasser could not substantiate his 'evidence'. Strip away what was effectively Allied wartime propaganda and all that remains is hearsay, showbusiness gossip and the fantasies of teenage girls like Mimi Reiter. Many of these tales relate to the years before 1933, before Hitler had control of the press and the police. He did not lack enemies then, and it is difficult to believe that they would have failed to make use of any sordid revelations.

And then there is August Kubizek, Hitler's best (and possibly only) schoolfriend. Neither

when he knew him in Linz, nor when they moved to the bright lights of Vienna did Hitler have any involvement with women. In this hedonistic, cosmopolitan city, every vice known to man or woman was on offer. But Hitler was a prude who affected a puritanical disdain for all weaknesses of the flesh. He did not drink, did not smoke and was probably the only 24-year-old virgin in the Austrian capital.

Kubizek's testimony is echoed by Hitler's comrades in the 16th Bavarian reserve infantry regiment: in circumstances that strip away all privacy, Hitler showed no interest in either sex. It is not impossible that he developed a late-flowering interest in sado-masochism, but most of the evidence is tainted and while his early life suggests sexual dysfunction, it implies he was asexual, not the lecherous deviant of wartime legend.



Above: Eva and Adolf as seen by the high party officials privy to their relationship: a bourgeois Bavarian couple who loved animals and children and who liked nothing better than to spend time quietly in the beautiful Obersalzberg.

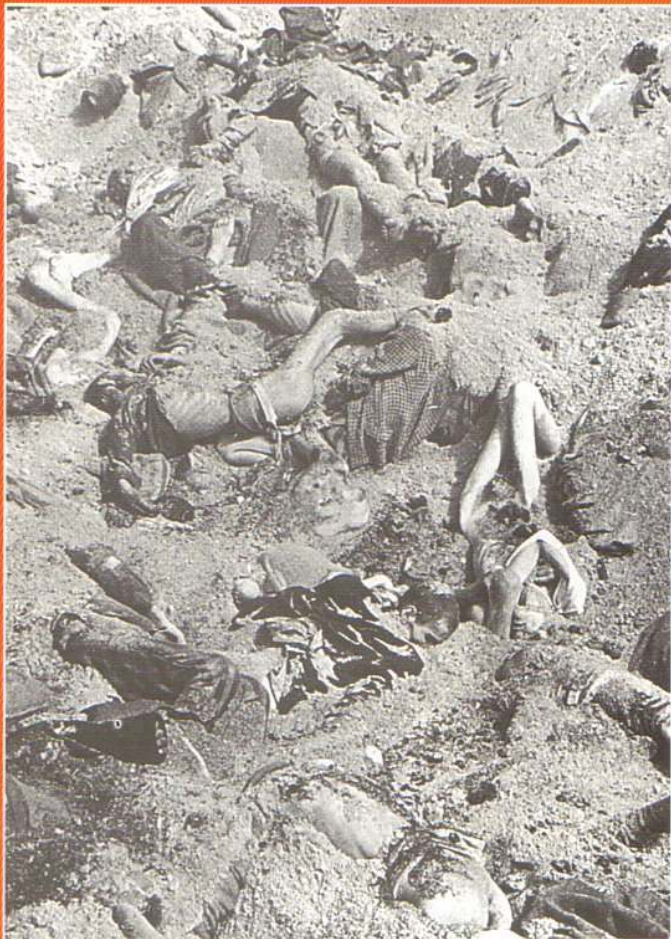


Above: Hitler's niece Geli, who may have killed herself over her uncle's violently possessive behaviour.

Left: Actress Renate Müller was reportedly driven to suicide by the Führer's perverted passions.

Far left: Even Eva tried to kill herself in the early days of her relationship with Hitler.

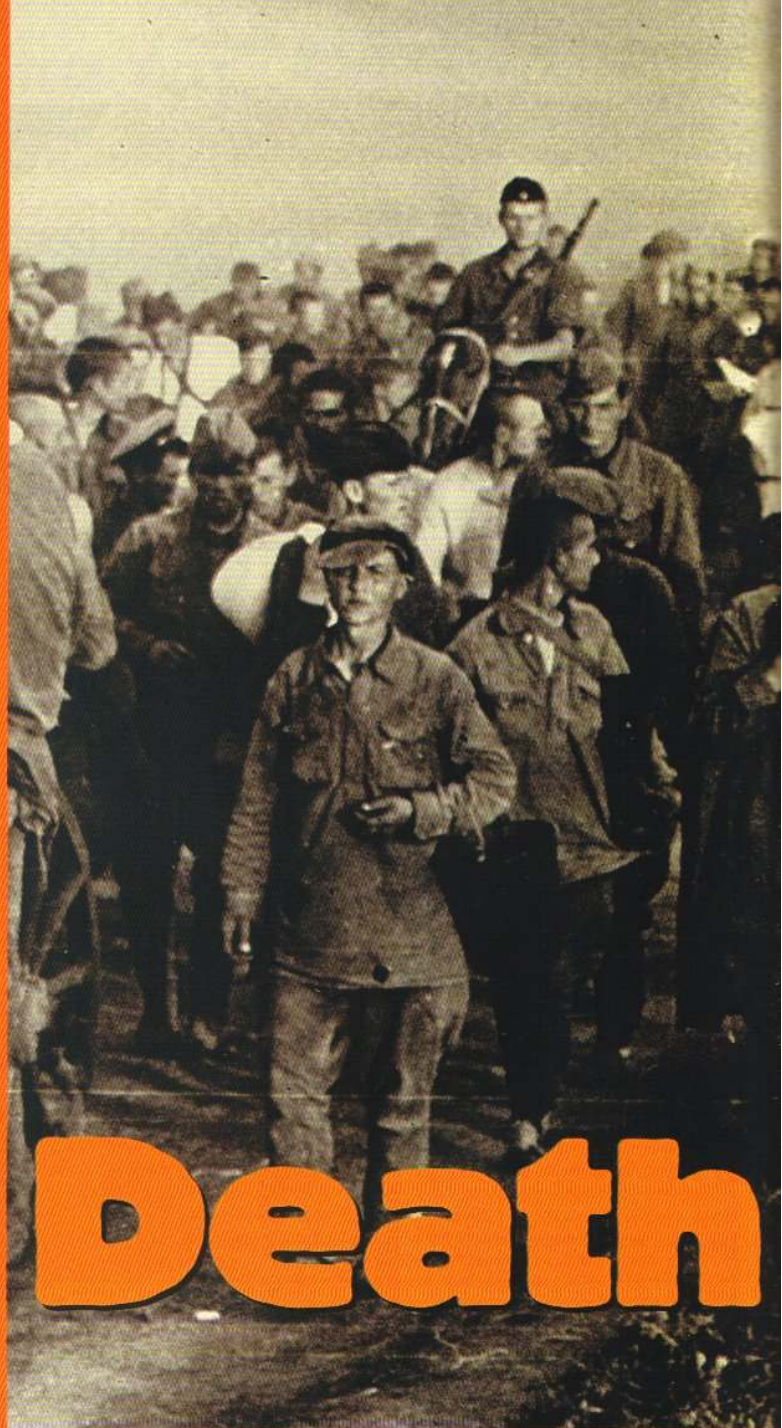
TRYING TO DESTROY THE EVIDENCE



Above: Before the development of systems for the mass destruction of bodies, the Nazis simply buried their victims. In the Reich's victorious early days this was considered sufficient, but with the prospect of losing the war such bodies could become evidence.

BY THE SUMMER of 1944, even the Reichsführer SS could see which way the wind was blowing. As the Russian army drove the Germans out of the Ukraine, into Poland and towards the frontiers of the Reich, it was time to hide the evidence of Nazi crimes. A specially created SS unit, *Sonderkommando* 1005, exhumed the bodies from killing fields across Russia, burning them to ashes.

The death camps were to disappear too. At Treblinka, where almost the entire Jewish population of Warsaw had been murdered, the gas ovens were blown up, the buildings levelled and the whole site turfed over before the Russians approached. The others were to be evacuated, their inmates sent to camps within the Nazi heartland. Some were to be used as slaves, building the ballistic missiles and rocket fighters that Hitler promised would snatch victory at the eleventh hour. The others were to be exterminated. The approach of the Allied armies did not make the Nazis rethink: it led to a series of hideous 'death marches' as enormous numbers of starving prisoners were herded across Europe.



Death

As the war turned against the Nazis, they anticipated world reaction to the awful truth of the concentration camps. It was decided to hide the evidence by destroying the camps in the paths of advancing Allied armies. But what should they do with the tens of thousands of inmates?



The first death marches involved the millions of Soviet prisoners of war captured during Operation Barbarossa in 1941. The Germans had absolutely no interest in keeping these men alive, and many were to die in the harsh winter of 1941/1942.

Marches

IN AUGUST 1944 the BBC correspondent in Russia, Alexander Werth, filed a report that described what the Red Army had found at Majdanek, Poland. Gigantic crematoria capable of burning 2,000 bodies per day, warehouses with 850,000 pairs of shoes, store rooms full of clothes, and — most pathetic of all — huge piles of children's toys. The BBC spiked the story, unwilling or unable to believe their reporter. The New York Herald Tribune commented, 'Even on top of all we have been taught of the

maniacal Nazi ruthlessness, this example sounds inconceivable...' This was as Hitler intended. As Himmler made plain to senior SS officers in 1943, the 'final solution' was to remain secret, a "page of glory in our history that shall never be written". And that was when he still believed the war could be won.

Camp inmates

By 1945 there were some 750,000 inmates still alive in the Nazi concentration camp system. Between a third and half of these people were to die in the last six months of the war, victims of

arbitrary executions or, more commonly, the denial of food and medical care.

Himmler appears to have issued the orders personally to selected camp commandants late in 1944. After his visit to the womens' camp at Ravensbrück, daily shootings were instituted to whittle down the numbers in advance of evacuation. Any inmates too sick to march were shot in the back of the head.

The International Committee of the Red Cross attempted to intervene early in 1945. By this time the evidence of the holocaust was becoming clear,

"Tired, exhausted, hungry, frozen through, we marched on. We had gone 100 kilometres with the emaciated inmates from Auschwitz, through valleys and over hills, through deep snow. It was a race against death."

**Dr Lucie Adelsberger
Auschwitz survivor**



Above: Eastern European Jews are rounded up by the SS. Many who survived against all odds in camps and ghettos were to die on the forced marches at the end of the war.

Below: Sixty thousand inmates of the Auschwitz complex were evacuated in the face of the advancing Red Army. About one in four died on the marches to camps in Germany.



A French prisoner of war is marched away. Many Allied POWs were moved from camp to camp at the end of the war, some towards the west and some away from freedom.

even to people who could not conceive of such barbarity in twentieth century Europe.

On 21 April, a Red Cross delegate reached Sachsenhausen just as the Commandant, SS-*Standartenführer* Keindel, was assembling his 40,000 prisoners. A rumble, like distant thunder was audible despite the heavy rain: the heavy artillery of Zhukov's Russian armies only ten miles away. Keindel refused to listen to reason, explaining that he had his orders from Himmler: no camps were to be allowed to fall into Allied hands intact. The emaciated prisoners were driven on to the road and marched away. Those unable to keep up were shot. The Red

Cross man saw twenty corpses on the roadside in the first few miles: all shot in the head.

Himmler had already met a representative of the World Jewish Congress via Swedish intermediaries. He promised Norbert Masur that the death marches would cease, that the surviving inmates would be protected. But he lied. His last minute attempt to bargain for his life was already over: Hitler had reacted with catatonic rage when Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald were overrun without being completely evacuated. Himmler was terrified of him. The death marches would continue until the last day of the war.

Even if Himmler had kept his

word, the killing would probably have continued. Before he recanted, at least some commandants had received orders to stop the slaughter. But they did not obey.

Helmbrechts horror

Alois Dörr commanded Helmbrechts, established in summer 1944 as a satellite facility of Flossenbürg concentration camp near Hof in Upper Franconia.

The prisoners were all women, mostly Poles and Russians arbitrarily seized by the occupying forces. About half were Jews, treated with even greater cruelty. They were made to work in the nearby armaments

factory. On 13 April the camp was evacuated, its approximately 1,100 prisoners being marched south-east, out of the Red Army's line of advance.

The column struggled along at an average pace of nine miles a day. A handful of dry bread, half-cooked potatoes or soup was issued once a day. Already severely malnourished, the women were reduced to eating rotten animal fodder.

The reaction of German civilians varied. In Ahornberg they were offered food by the local population, but the guards intercepted it. The bread was fed to chickens in front of the starving prisoners. At Volary, with the US Army closing in,

JOURNEYS TO OBLIVION

The evacuation of Auschwitz in January 1945 was probably the single biggest movement of concentration camp inmates of the war. At least 60,000 were marched about 50 kilometres to the railhead at Wodislaw, where they were loaded into cattle trucks and shipped to Flossenbürg, Sachsenhausen, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald, Dachau and Mauthausen. At least 15,000 died on the march, with SS guards killing anyone who could not keep up.

Some of Auschwitz sub-camps remained in use a little longer. The camp at Blechhammer was not evacuated until the end of January, when the 4,000 inmates were force marched westwards towards Gross Rosen. Around 1,000 died en-route.

Many of the survivors were on the march again in April as the Anglo-American armies closed in from the west.



Although the SS had plans to evacuate Dachau, it was still occupied as US Army troops arrived on 29 April 1945. However, only three days before the SS guards had taken 7,000 prisoners from the camp and marched them south.

With Allied armies pouring across most of Germany, there were very few destinations available. The inmates were heading for Tegernsee – just opposite the spot where Hitler had unleashed the SS against Ernst Röhm and the SA only 11 years before.

As with most such marches, anyone who could not keep up

with the column was shot out of hand by the SS. Many others died from exposure or exhaustion as the column marched through the night, stopping only briefly for rest.

Over 1,000 bodies littered the route south before the victims arrived at Tegernsee on 2 May. They were eventually rescued by Allied troops.

Below: Prisoners from Dachau march through the Bavarian woods on their way to the Tegernsee, about 100 km south east of Munich.





Above: The ordeal continued after their marches ended. Many were taken further by rail – locked in unheated rail wagons, left without food and water for days. Tens of thousands froze or starved to death on their way to new camps in Germany.

Below: The Red Army liberated the Auschwitz complex at the end of January 1945, but the 7,000 prisoners who remained to be freed were a fraction who had been there at the beginning of the month. Tens of thousands of inmates had been murdered in the previous weeks, and more than 60,000 had been marched away towards concentration camps in Germany.



townspeople were also prevented from giving them food, and those Jews who had received something to eat were beaten with truncheons and whips.

At other places, the ragged column of prisoners was stoned by local children when it was learned that they were Jews. The prisoners spent some nights in unheated barns, others in the open. Dressed in tattered rags, the combination of starvation rations and the cold meant many were found dead each morning.

As if this appalling process of attrition was not enough, the survivors of the Helmbrechts death march reported several outright massacres, perpetrated by both male and female guards. Sometimes the bodies were buried, sometimes they were left by the roadside. On at least one occasion, Dörr had the women buried alive.

Nowhere to go

By 5 May, the guards and prisoners had been on the march for three weeks. The Nazi chain of command had disintegrated and the commandant was left without orders. The Russian forces were to the north and east, with US troops closing from the west; they would link up within

“Our guards deliberately dropped bread in the road. Anyone bending to pick it up was shot in the head. We were so hungry that we ate pieces of flesh from the buttocks and arms of those who died.”

Ernest Wolf
Death march survivor

24 hours. Dörr procured identity cards for the surviving non-Jewish prisoners and set them free. Most of the Jewish women were close to death, lying in barns unable to continue. Some of those still able to stay on their feet were ordered to race up a nearby hill. Anyone who stopped running was shot. At the summit, the exhausted survivors were told they were free.

The women were saved by US Army medical teams. The physicians were amazed that the living skeletons they took to be

people in their seventies were women aged 25-35, degraded, starved until their bones were visible through the sores, yet still clinging to life.

In many cases the concentration camp guards continued their grisly duties too late to escape the Allied armies. Even when self-preservation overrode their genocidal mission and they let the prisoners go, survival in the chaos of Europe was often a matter of chance. Millions of people were on the roads, a human tide surging west ahead of the avenging Red Army. Others meandered at random, slave workers escaped from farms or bombed-out factories, ex-prisoners-of-war, deserters, doomed units of Germany's foreign allies. The fall of Nazism created a brutal, Hobbesian world in which the starving, diseased inmates of the concentration camps were least fitted to survive.

German military units continued to commit racially-motivated murder so long as they had weapons in their hands. One group of Jews hiding out in a Hungarian forest was surprised by a repair company from 2nd SS panzer division Das Reich in the last week of the war.

The SS men were retreating from the failure of the last major German counter-attack of the war. Knowing full well the war was lost, their evil regime finished, they slaughtered the Jews with sadistic relish.

Beyond all reason

The death marches began with the aim of hiding the evidence of the holocaust. But they continued even after the world was sent reeling by the photographs from Bergen-Belsen. They continued despite the collapse of Nazi administration: the prisoners herded around the ever shrinking Reich in conditions of dreadful cruelty as if their guards were incapable of independent thought.

Many senior officials made their escape, going underground in Germany with false papers or attempting to flee abroad. Left unattended, the machinery of the holocaust continued to function until it was shut off by Allied soldiers.

Even then, some guards left it so late that their idea of escape was to dress in prison rags – as if British soldiers (let alone the surviving prisoners) could not tell the difference between a well-fed SS man and a skeletal inmate.



US infantrymen examine the remains of former Dachau inmates. These were some of the 7,000 prisoners marched south to Tegernsee less than three days before the camp was liberated.

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH



VOLKS DEUTSCH



German-speaking schoolchildren led by Hitler Youth members head a parade of Nazi supporters in Czechoslovakia. The Sudeten German desire to become part of the Reich was a major factor in the European crisis of 1938 and 1939.

Native German speakers, who lived all over Europe, were a key means of spreading the Nazi message and achieving Nazi aims after Hitler came to power.

THE DANZIG GERMANS

NAZIS IN THE POLISH CORRIDOR



Above: Just like their fellows in Germany, the Nazis in Danzig were not averse to using violence to gain their political ends.

BEFORE 1933, DANZIG'S largely German population returned assemblies that mirrored the divisions of Weimar Germany. The city was ruled by a Senate which had twelve members. In 1930 the Nazi Party gained 19% of the vote and in May 1933 became the largest party.

In 1939, propaganda about the plight of the Danzig Germans was used to justify Hitler's war aims. Photographs published in an Italian picture magazine showed persecuted Germans living in the Corridor escaping to Germany.

Two in particular stood out.

They featured mothers with small children; one waded through marshland holding her baby, while in the other a border guard assisted the pair across a barbed wire fence.

Even though they were called "Puerile Propaganda of the Nazi Peace-Breakers" when reprinted in Britain, the pictures were seen as justification by Germans for annexing western Czechoslovakia and attacking of Poland, 'to protect fellow Germans abroad'.

Right: Adolf Hitler is hailed by the citizens of Danzig after the conquest of Poland.



Above: Danzig Nazis parade before an election. The growth of the party in the free city in the 1930s mirrored Nazi expansion in the rest of Germany.



THE VERSAILLES Settlement of 1919, that followed defeat in World War 1, saw Germany deprived of her Imperial colonial empire. In Africa the colonies of Togo, Kameroun, Southwest Africa and German East Africa passed into British control, as did the islands of the south west Pacific known as the German Pacific Territories. Closer to home Germany lost border territory to Denmark, Poland and Belgium, while the coal fields of Alsace-Lorraine, won by Prussia from France in 1871, went back to France. Throughout Europe national borders were re-drawn and even new nations created.

However, nationalist leaders reasoned, if borders could be moved to incorporate new

territory, they could equally be moved to relinquish it.

The desire to bring the Germanic territories of Europe from their current foreign control into a greater German state was an article of faith for Hitler and the Nazis.

NAZIS IN DANZIG

In Europe there were several countries with large populations for whom German was their first language. Poland, Hungary, Transylvanian Romania, and the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia had German-speaking communities of between one and five million while in Yugoslavia there were up to a million German speakers. Within Europe the Nazis were actively engaged in political and propaganda activities in Hungary and Yugoslavia, while pro-Nazi

political movements of varying size existed in almost every other country.

One of the biggest bones of contention was the city of Danzig in East Prussia. Historically it was subject to the old Kingdom of Poland, even when it was one of the major ports of the Hanseatic League. It was established as a 'Free City' by the League of Nations in 1919. Under the Treaty of Versailles it was divided from Germany by the Danzig or Polish Corridor, a strip of land that gave the newly re-created state of Poland access to the Baltic Sea.

GREATER GERMANY

For Hitler and his Pan-German mentors, a long term goal was the creation of Greater Germany, a country that united those people who were ethnically

German, or *Volksdeutsche*, into one nation. In November 1937 Hitler explained his plans:

"The aim of German policy is to secure and preserve the racial community – and to enlarge it."

For many Germans or German communities living abroad, Hitler's Third Reich seemed a dynamic and vigorous nation which had grown out of defeat and the decadence of the Weimar Republic. It was exciting to be involved as *Auslandsdeutsche*, whether at a distance or as close neighbours.

The German Foreign Ministry set up a department under Ernst Wilhelm Bohle to co-ordinate the activities of German nationalists abroad. The Berlin based *Auslands Organisation* or AO had eight departments defined by geographical area; it was regarded as the Reich's 43rd



Above: British-born Wilhelm Bohle headed the Nazi Auslands Organisation. Before the war, he met with a prominent critic of the Party – Winston Churchill. His aim was an unsuccessful attempt to convince the British politician that German interest in German-speaking communities abroad was purely cultural. Bohle denied they were breeding grounds for spies and fifth columnists for use in the war that Churchill knew was coming.

Gau. The effectiveness of the AO was mixed but this did not prevent Bohle from pronouncing grandly "A German Day in Buenos Aires or Chicago concerns us just as deeply as the struggle of our brethren near our frontiers".

UNION WITH AUSTRIA

Austria, a neighbour to the south that had been created out of the old Austro-Hungarian Hapsburg Empire, was entirely German speaking, and significantly the Führer's birthplace. Its population was obviously *Volksdeutsche* and thus it was natural that they should be united with Germany through the Union or *Anschluss* of March 1938. The Austrian Nazis fronted by Artur Seyss-Inquart had pressed for union with Germany and the Austrian Legion, the military arm of the Austrian Nazis, had waged a guerrilla war against the government in Vienna. When Seyss-Inquart was appointed Minister of the Interior in the government of Kurt von Schuschnigg, he was able to 'agree' to the German invasion of Austria as a 'protective' measure. Following *Anschluss*, Austria disappeared as a country,

becoming the *Ostmark* of Greater Germany under Reich Governor or *Reichsstatthalter* Artur Seyss-Inquart.

For the ordinary Austrian, incorporation into Great Germany led to increased employment and productivity. In a plebiscite organised in Austria and Germany on 10 April 1938 some 99.07% of voters endorsed the union of the two states.

In Czechoslovakia, the Sudetenland, the western and northern border areas facing German and Austria had a German speaking population of three million. The area of Bohemia had been awarded to Czechoslovakia by the Treaty of Saint-Germain en Laye between Austria and the Allies. The area had rich mineral resources, and it also housed major munitions factories at Pilsen.

The indigenous Nazi movement, the *Sudeten Deutsche Partei* (SdP) created by Konrad Henlein, kept up pressure for the Sudetenland to be united with Germany. In 1933 the 9,500 strong Sudeten German Party was banned by the Czech government, but this only appeared to encourage it. In 1934 Henlein held his first mass

meeting and gathered 20,000 people, and by 1938 membership had grown to 1.3 million.

Four years later Hitler told Henlein "Sie sind auch morgen mein Statthalter" – "I will stand by you. Tomorrow you will be my viceroy". Henlein became *Reichsstatthalter* of the Civil Administration in Bohemia and Moravia but had little real power. He was captured by the US 7th Army in May 1945 and committed suicide in an internment camp.

WORLDWIDE NAZIS

There were German communities in Australia, South Africa and the former colony of Southwest Africa. In the vast spaces of the

USSR there were about five million German speakers.

Canada, which had entered the war in 1939, had a considerable German speaking population and pro-Nazi political movements. Mexico remained neutral up to 1942, when it joined the Allies. It had Nazi style political organisations and over 2,000 German-speaking residents.

Venezuela, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay and Chile had sizeable German populations, but only Brazil and Argentina, with large numbers of emigré Germans, had Nazi style political parties.

In 1939, the Argentine *Auslandsdeutsche* organisation had 60,000 members. It ran shipping lines, student exchange programs and a special news service, *Transocean*. In 1943 a German espionage network was uncovered in Argentina and in January 1944 the country severed diplomatic relations with Germany and Japan.

In 1945 Argentina became a haven for wanted men from the Third Reich. These included up to 40 indicted war criminals, most prominent of which were Adolf Eichmann, the chief organiser of the Final Solution and Dr Josef Mengele, camp doctor at Auschwitz. Eichmann was brought to justice in Israel in 1962, but Mengele survived to die of old age in South America.

Below: Propaganda pictures showing volunteer 'Freikorps' members. These were used by the Nazis to show that the Sudeten Germans were willing to fight the Czech government, and that Germany should help them.



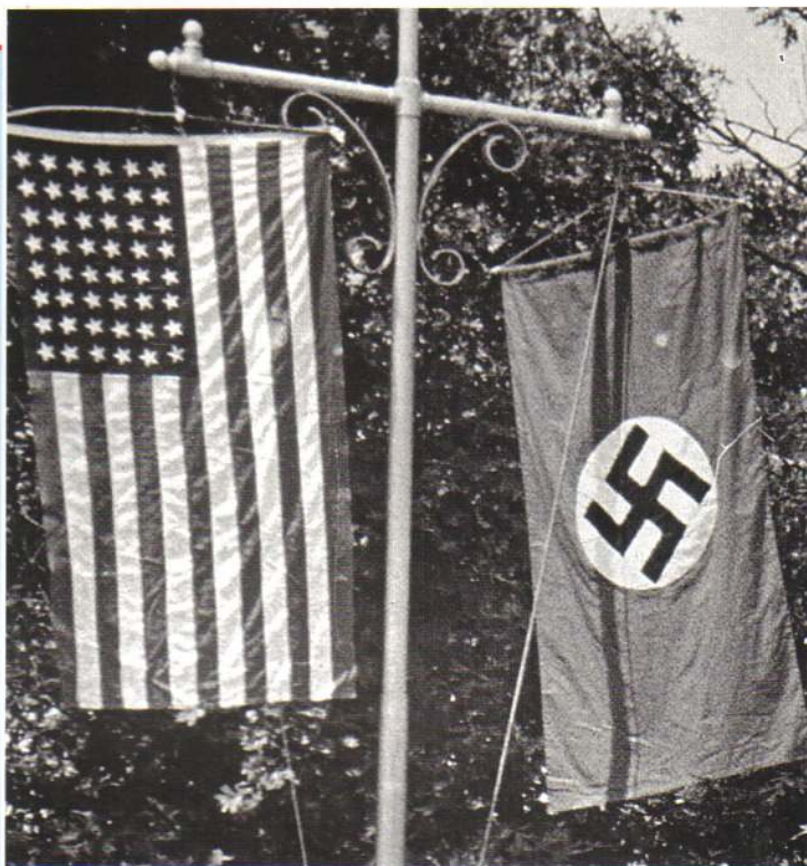
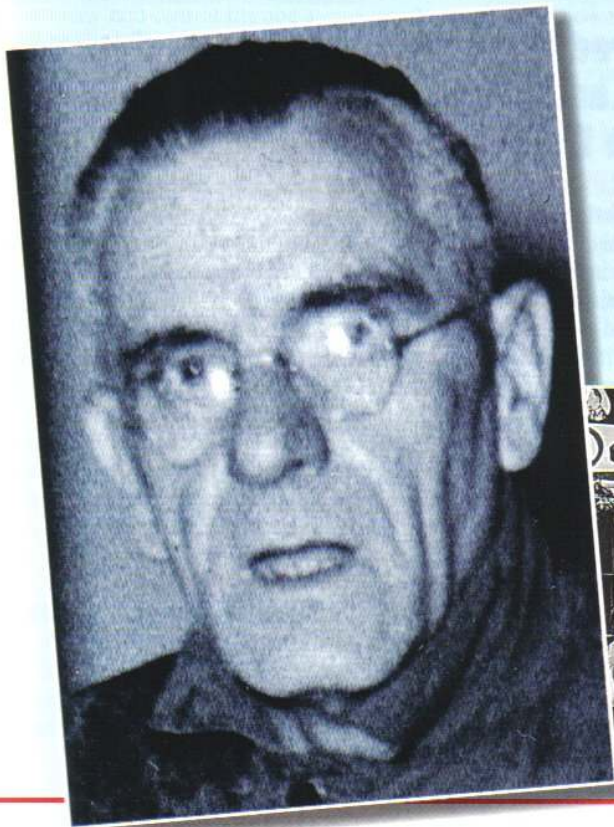
Nazis in America

GERMANS EMIGRATED to the United States in large numbers through the 19th and 20th Centuries. The depression hit Germany harder than most, and many crossed the Atlantic looking for work. By the 1930s there were more than five million German speaking Americans. In 1933 the Nazi Party established a separate *Gau* or administrative district for German residents of the USA.

Under Fritz Julius Kuhn, an early member of the NSDAP who had emigrated to Mexico and then the United States, the overtly Nazi *Amerika-deutscher Volksbund* (German-American League) was established. It had originally been an organisation called 'The Friends of New Germany' before changing its name, but it was more often known simply as the Bund.

In 1933 Hitler appeared to offer tacit support when he announced that "The German component of the American people will be the source of its political and mental resurrection". However, the Steuben Society, a conservative German-American organisation, warned Hitler that the Bund's activities were offending many Americans. In 1935 Hitler cut formal ties with the Bund and denied that German-Americans owed any allegiance to the Reich. He promised to "throw any official into the North Sea who sent Nazi Propaganda to the United States".

At its height the Bund claimed over 200,000 adherents (though when investigated by the FBI Kuhn would admit to only 9,000 members). In February 1939 he addressed a mass meeting, modelled on a Nazi *Parteitag*, in Madison Square Garden in New York. However, Kuhn's anti-semitic ranting was overshadowed by the 50,000 anti-Nazi protesters outside the building. Following violence at a Bund meeting in New York, Kuhn was arrested on embezzlement charges and the party became subject to an investigation by the Senate Un-American Activities Committee.



Above: The Bund had headquarters in Milwaukee, Chicago and Yorkville. It also established three training camps: 'Hindenburg' in the strongly German speaking state of Wisconsin, 'Nordland' in New York State and 'Siegfried' in New Jersey.



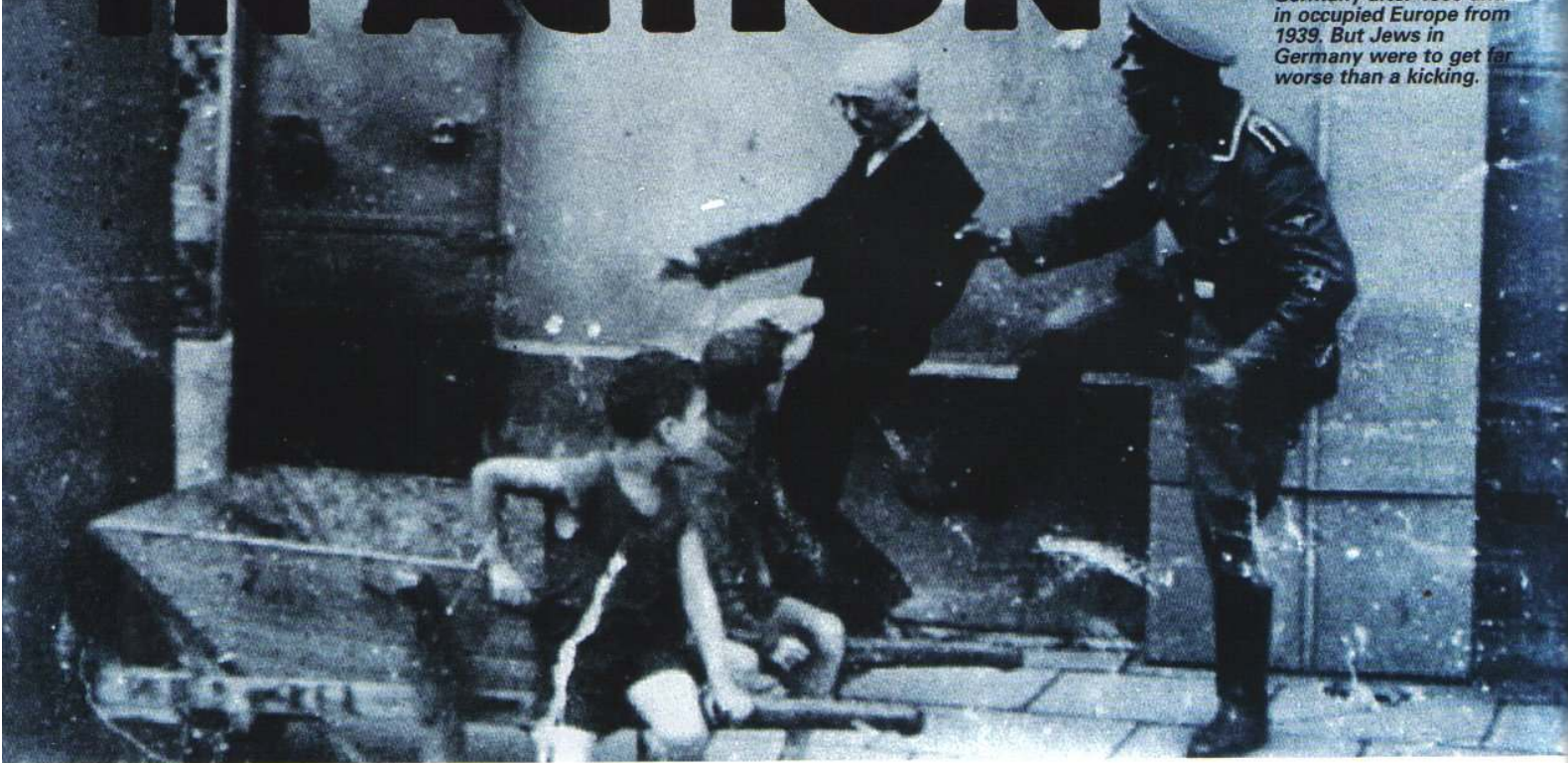
Above and left: At its height, the Bund claimed as many as 200,000 followers, with 25,000 active members. These included a teenage group modelled on the Hitler Youth, and 9,000 uniformed 'Storm Troopers'.

Far left: Fritz Kuhn was imprisoned for embezzlement in 1939. After his release in 1943 his US citizenship was revoked, and he was interned as an undesirable alien. Deported to Germany after the war, he was immediately arrested and tried as a war criminal. He was again imprisoned, and died in 1951.



ANTISEMITISM IN ACTION

An SS security Scharführer kicks a Jew down the street – a scene which could have been repeated all over Germany after 1933 and in occupied Europe from 1939. But Jews in Germany were to get far worse than a kicking.



From 1933, German Jews were living on borrowed time. Using legislation, rabid anti-Semitic propaganda and brutal violence, the Nazis set about creating a Jew-free Reich.

IMMEDIATELY on coming to power in 1933, the Nazis enacted anti-Jewish legislation, confiscating property and depriving Jews of civil rights. In 1938, the assassination of a Nazi diplomat in Paris was the excuse for the infamous *Kristallnacht*, which saw attacks on Jewish synagogues, shops and homes all over the Reich. German anti-Semitism was taken to the ultimate extreme in the 'final solution' to the 'Jewish question', which led directly to the holocaust and the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Anti-Semitism has existed in Europe since before the Middle Ages but only in Nazi Germany did it become one of the driving forces of a modern state. Racism and racial purity were probably the most important themes of National Socialist philosophy, and in pursuit of 'racial perfection' the Nazi state introduced policies the like of which no civilised government had ever contemplated: prohibition of inter-racial marriage, enforced sterilisation, and the murder of mental defectives and the chronically ill. It encouraged the persecution of those considered morally or

racially inferior, such as homosexuals, gypsies and the few blacks in Germany. Above all, the Nazis targeted the Jews.

It should not have been a surprise. Hitler's ideas were set out in *Mein Kampf*, and it was clear that the Führer was obsessed with racial purity.

"All who are from inferior races are chaff to be winnowed out," he wrote. "The German people are superior, the Master Race destined to rule – just as long as they maintain their purity. Admitting the blood of inferior races will pollute, corrupt and destroy."

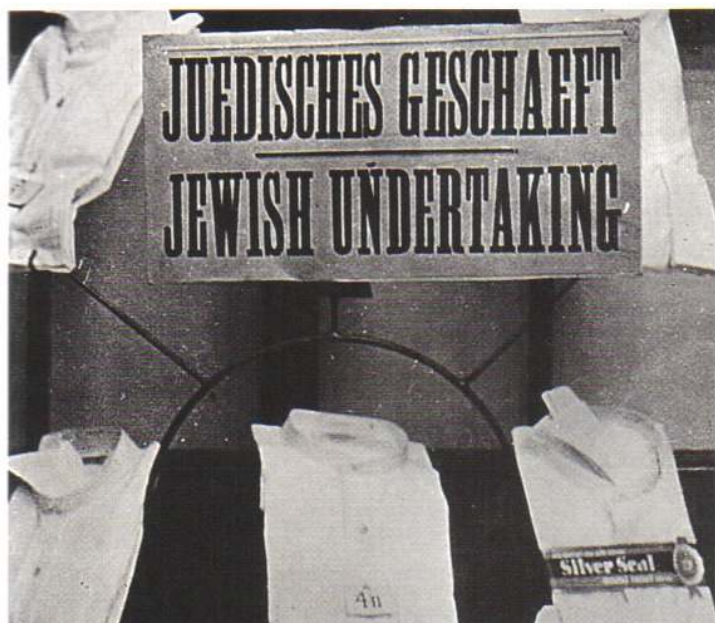
Hitler's anti-Semitism was not

unique. It was primarily a product or perversion of the ideas of 19th century Romanticism. Central to the Romantic ideal, fuelled by folklore, tradition and myth, was the notion of the nation, race or *volk*.

The Jews had for centuries been the victims of church-inspired persecution, but the new hatreds were powered by racial, rather than religious hatred. Their differences in dress, in language, in customs and in culture made them obvious aliens in European society, and as such presented a ready-made enemy for the new racists.

ENVOUS OF SUCCESS

German anti-Semitism also fed in part on envy at the commercial success of the more assimilated sector of European Jewry, who were closely associated with the



Above: A Jewish shirtmaker in Berlin is forced to put an identifying sign in his front window. It is printed in English as well as German, to ensure that foreigners will be able to recognise boycotted premises.

growth of capitalism and the social evils which it engendered.

Anti-Semitism was given a pseudo-scientific respectability by the turn-of-the-century writings of people like the Frenchman Arthur Comte de Gobineau and the Briton Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Their ideas fell on fertile ground with the extreme nationalists who arose in Germany and central Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. They became the central plank on which the nascent National Socialist party stood in the years following World War I.

To all outward appearances, Jews in Germany were not likely targets for hatred. There were only around 500,000 of them, and they were largely assimilated into the general population. They did not stand out as being 'different' like many of the Jews in Eastern Europe. In certain areas their contribution to German life went far beyond what one might expect from their relatively small numbers. There was discrimination, of course, but it tended to be petty and social rather than life threatening.

German Jews were intensely patriotic. One in three Jewish males served in the armed forces during World War I, a large

majority seeing combat. Twelve thousand were killed in action, and over 30,000 were decorated for bravery. After the war, Jews continued to figure prominently in German life. Many were civil servants, lawyers, doctors and teachers, while others were important figures in the arts.

Those years of service to Germany stood for little when the Nazis came to power. Attacks on Jews began immediately. Hitler became Chancellor: some were spontaneous, while others were organised by the party.

AMERICAN WITNESS

Ralph C. Busser, the American Consul General in Leipzig, sent a report to the State Department concerning a series of such attacks which took place in Dresden in March 1933.

"Uniformed Nazis raided the synagogue, interrupting the evening service. They arrested 25 worshippers, and tore prayer caps from others. Eighteen Jewish shops had their windows broken by rioters led by Stormtroopers. Five Polish Jews arrested in Dresden were each compelled to drink half a litre of castor oil. Some of the men had their beards shaved, or their hair clipped in ridiculous shapes. One had his

Nazi Boycott

The first organised attack on German Jews

AT TEN O'CLOCK on Saturday, 1 April 1933, the Nazi Party initiated its boycott of Jewish business. Storm troopers posted themselves outside shops, threatening anyone trying to enter. Crude slogans and yellow-painted Stars of David were daubed on windows, and more SA men paraded up and down the streets with banners.

The prime mover in the boycott was Hitler himself. He had been annoyed at overseas reaction to the first spontaneous outbreaks of violence directed at Jews – particularly in America, where there had been talk of sanctions against German exports. Hitler told Goebbels:

"Perhaps the foreign Jews will think differently of the business when their racial comrades here start paying the price."

The 'Central Committee for

Counteracting Jewish Atrocities and Boycotts' issued detailed instructions to Nazi organisations all over Germany. Clause Three of an order issued on 29 March stated:

"Local action committees must immediately encourage the boycott by means of propaganda and publicity. The principle is: No German must buy from a Jew or allow the Jew and his backers to promote their goods. The boycott must be general: it must be supported by all Germans and it must hit Jewry where it is most vulnerable."

Police forces were instructed to tacitly assist the action, only intervening where life or German property was threatened. To minimise overseas criticism, the action groups were instructed to make sure that foreign and foreign-owned property – even Jewish property – was not attacked.

Below: The Anschluss in 1938 saw Nazi boycott tactics spread to Austria. This man's sign says: 'This pig shops in Jewish stores'.





Above: The audience at an anti-Jewish rally held in the Sportpalast, Berlin, in August 1935. The slogans, mostly by Julius Streicher, include one which says 'The Jews are our misfortune'.

Right: Julius Streicher was a former teacher turned writer and publisher. The most rabid Jew-hater in the Nazi hierarchy, he was a valuable asset in Hitler's rise. Once they were in power, however, even the Nazis found his coarse and brutal anti-Semitism an embarrassment, and by 1940 he had been eased out of all major state and party positions.

hair torn out by the roots."

"Most of the victims of assault are threatened with worse violence if they report the attacks: as a result, the true extent of the terror against Jews, Communists and Social Democrats is not known."

SPONTANEOUS ACTION

Much of the early violence against Jews was spontaneous, organised by Stormtroopers at the local level. Nationally, they were helped by the state of emergency declared after the Reichstag fire: civil liberties were suspended, police (including auxiliaries drafted from the SA and the SS) could search homes and confiscate goods without a warrant or any recourse by the victims to law. At

the same time, the death penalty was extended to cover a number of crimes, one of which was 'serious disturbances to the peace.' Such disturbances could be whatever the police or Nazi Judges said that they were.

However, there was also a co-ordinated national campaign against Jews. On March 26 Hitler instructed Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels to implement a large-scale boycott of Jewish businesses. Goebbels set up the 'Central Committee for Counteracting Jewish Atrocity Tales and Boycotts'. Julius Streicher, Gauleiter of Franconia and one of the most rabid of

PROPAGANDA PLAYED A major part in whipping up anti-Jewish feeling in Germany. Under Joseph Goebbels, the Propaganda Ministry controlled the flow of information to the general population. By means of half-truths, distortions, and outright lies, the first true 'spin doctors' created an evil image of the Jew. Information posters in schools likened Jews to the Devil, and 'proved' that an international Jewish conspiracy, which controlled world finances, was dedicated to the destruction of the Aryan Race.

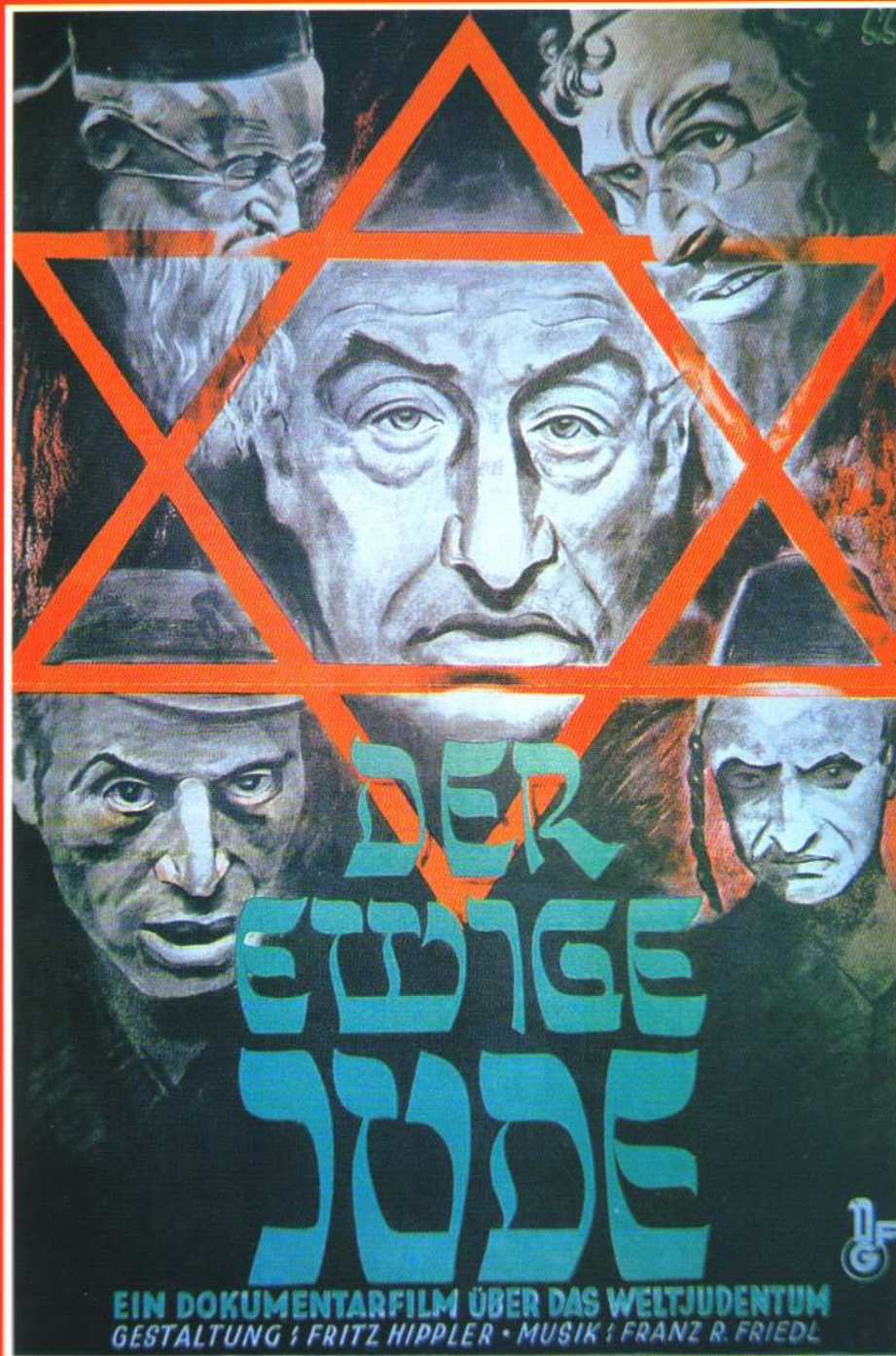
Tabloid newspapers like Julius Streicher's nauseating *Der Stürmer* regularly depicted Jews as sex-crazed monsters whose greatest ambitions were to defile women of pure German blood.

The cinema presented a grotesque picture of Jews in Germany. Films like *Jud Süß* were made with great professional skill, but they invariably depicted the Jew as a hook-nosed, long-haired and bearded monster. In fact, most German Jews were fully assimilated, and looked pretty much like their 'Aryan' neighbours.

Below: A recruiting poster appealing for Flemish-speaking Belgians to join the Waffen SS displays one of the characteristics of German anti-Semitic propaganda: the claim that Jews were behind the Allied war effort.



Anti-Jewish Propaganda



Above: Der Ewige Jude – 'the Eternal Jew' – was the title of a travelling exhibition which presented the warped Nazis view of Judaism. It was turned into a powerful quasi-documentary, which compared the Jew with rats. To heighten the similarity, squalid scenes from Polish ghettos were interspersed with scenes of rats fighting.

Right centre and right: Coarse, anti-Semitic propaganda was not a German preserve. It was produced in the occupied territories and by Germany's allies during the war. These cartoons appeared in Hungary. They depict the Jew as a corruptor of innocence and as the puppetmaster behind capitalism and the decadent European aristocracy.



Above: A typical Der Stürmer publicity poster. The caricature is of a Jew arriving in Germany, and the caption states that, "Without an answer to the Jewish question, humanity can achieve no redemption."



THE HOLOCAUST



Above: Anti-Semitism took on an even more sinister slant with the outbreak of war. These SS men are rounding up Jews to be sent to the Ghetto in Warsaw.

Below: Streicher and Hitler visit a factory. Condemned as a prime mover in Germany's campaign against the Jews, Julius Streicher was hanged at Nuremberg.



Above: some of the last of Germany's Jews are rounded up to be 're-settled' in Eastern Europe. Most would be slaughtered in the death camps.



Nazi Jew-haters, was appointed to head the committee. Other members included Himmler, Robert Ley, and Hans Frank.

The boycott started on April 1 1933, but its effect was mixed. In some cities, armed Stormtroopers waited menacingly at the doors of Jewish businesses, frightening off customers. They often inspired attacks on Jews and their property. However, many Germans continued to use Jewish shops, and the boycott was called off after a day.

ANTI-SEMITIC LAWS

A week later, the first of a series of new laws was announced. Between 1933 and 1939 almost 400 were to be passed, effectively excluding Jews from every aspect of German life. Jews were purged from the civil service and from state schools. Jews were forbidden to marry non-Jews, and all Jewish property and businesses had to be registered. In 1937, most were taken over, and Jewish employees were dismissed. Four out of five were bought from the government by German companies, who acquired them at bargain prices. By 1938 Jewish doctors were forbidden to treat non-Jews, and Jewish lawyers were forbidden to practice.

These iniquities aroused very little reaction in ordinary Germans. There were just over half a million Jews in Germany, which represented less than one percent of the population. The



Test of Faith



Above: Graffiti daubed on a Düsseldorf synagogue. As many as 1,000 synagogues were burned down in the Kristallnacht pogrom of 1938.

Left: Jewish sites were attacked by Nazis and Nazi sympathisers all over Europe. This graffiti, calling for "all Jews to be pushed into the sea," has been daubed on the wall of a Dutch synagogue.

Synagogues were obvious targets for Nazi violence and even desecration, and Jews often saw worship disrupted. Rabbi Leo Baeck felt that their suffering was a test, and that God would redeem them.

Paradoxically, adversity made even the most secular of Jews who remained in Germany more interested in their roots. Synagogue attendance rose, and

courses on Jewish history were oversubscribed.

But the future of Germany's Jews became bleaker with the outbreak of war. Up until that time, the primary aim of the Nazis had been to get the Jews out of Germany, by fair means or foul. Now Hitler and his minions would have to come up with another solution to the 'Jewish Problem' – a 'Final' solution.

majority of citizens did not even know a Jew. Their opinions were formed by Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry, and by publications like Julius Streicher's violently crude tabloid *Der Stürmer*.

The result of such manipulation of the public was a system that pre-figured

Apartheid-era South Africa. Jews became outcasts, unable to get jobs, unable to use public toilets, barred from restaurants and hotels, unable even to sit on park benches used by 'Aryans'.

Some Jews tried to work with the regime, but it didn't take long for them to realise that there was

no accommodation to be had with the Nazis. Most Jews felt only disbelief and despair, and suicide rates rose dramatically.

Emigration seemed the only escape. Between 1933 and 1939 about half of Germany's Jews fled the country. They moved to France, to Britain, to America,

leaving possessions and assets behind to be seized. Others managed to get their capital out, generally deposited in Swiss banks, but could not get out of the country themselves. A lot of the money is still there over half a century later, the Swiss never having released it.



Ernst Röhm

SA LEADER

Ernst Röhm was a key early member of the Nazi Party. But he was to become a liability to his close friend, Adolf Hitler .

ERNST RÖHM was born in Munich on November 28, 1887 to an old family of Bavarian civil servants. It was perhaps rebellion against this comfortable middle-class background that set him on a path that would eventually lead to his destruction by a man he thought was a friend.

He joined the Army just before August 1914 and throughout his service fought hard. He was wounded, but enjoyed the tough camaraderie of the front line. He was decorated

with the Iron Cross and received the Wound Badge. After the war he admitted that he divided people into soldiers and civilians, friends and enemies, and joked "Since I am an immature and wicked man, war and unrest appeal to me more than good bourgeois order".

Like many German soldiers in 1918 he was shocked by the defeat of Imperial Germany and found solace in the Freikorps which crushed the revolutionary government in Munich in 1919. Röhm, now a Captain, used his military contacts to build up a cache of weapons. Stored near

Munich, they were to be used against left wing political groups in Bavaria.

It was Röhm's group which recruited Corporal Hitler as a political spy. In spite of their rank difference, Röhm and Hitler became friends - close enough that they used the affectionate *du* rather than the formal *sie*.

During the Beer Hall Putsch Röhm led his "Reich War Flag" group to capture the Munich army commander, General von Lossow. But the General ordered Röhm to dismiss his men and the serving captain obeyed. For his part in the Putsch Röhm was



Adolf Hitler and Ernst Röhm had very different ideas about the future of Germany, ideas which would lead to a collision once the Nazis snatched power.

jailed but almost immediately released on probation.

Out of the army, he worked for a short time in a factory and then as a salesman for a publisher of patriotic works. At the same time, he tried to keep the banned SA in existence, renaming it the *Frontbann*. However, he was invited to Bolivia as a military instructor, and in 1924 he moved to South America.

Return to Politics

Following the Nazi election successes in September 14, 1930 Hitler contacted Röhm to ask him to re-organise and train the SA. This was the kind of challenge Röhm enjoyed, and he returned to Germany. He and his staff took an oath of loyalty to Hitler and from January 1931 set about the task with enthusiasm, using the structure of German Army as a model. In three months the SA was 170,000 strong; by the end of 1933 Röhm had two million men wearing Brown Shirts.

But the seeds of future internal conflict were being sown. The SA was led by men who had followed National Socialism from its early difficult days and not the 'March Violets' who had joined after Hitler had achieved power in 1933.

Röhm's vision

Unlike Hitler and most of his entourage, Röhm was a true revolutionary. He saw the SA not just as a street fighting organisation which would break up rival party meetings, but as the spearhead of a movement which would change German society. He saw danger in compromise and in allowing the status quo to remain unchallenged.

Röhm's ideas were controversial. He alienated the old land-owning families and the industrialists. These were the people who financed the Nazis – but if the party went the way Röhm wanted it to, he planned to dispossess them anyway.

HITLER'S HENCHMEN



Above: in the early days of National Socialism, Ernst Röhm put his organisational talents firmly behind Adolf Hitler as the Führer worked to neutralise Nazi leadership rivals.

Right: The SS was nominally subordinate to the SA, but Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler had big plans, and he began plotting to eliminate Röhm soon after Hitler came to power.

Far right: Alfred Rosenberg addresses a meeting of Berlin's foreign press corps. It was arranged by Röhm, who characteristically had laid on a 'beer evening'.



The former soldier also saw the SA as the new German Army, in place of the conservative *Reichswehr*. These views were reported to Hess, the Deputy Führer and to von Reichenau, Field Marshal von Blomberg's chief of staff, by Viktor Lutze the SA leader in Hamburg. Von Reichenau was a committed Nazi, and was in contact with Himmler and the SS.

Powerful enemies

In addition to making some powerful enemies, Röhm's personal life also offended senior members of the Nazi Party.

Röhm was short, his red face was scarred from World War I, and he was overweight from excesses of beer and large meals. Finally he was a homosexual – a sexual taste that would be made illegal in Nazi Germany and send thousands of homosexuals to concentration camps.

Despite this, the normally puritanical Hitler still retained an affection for his old comrade, and on New Year's Day 1934 he wrote to him and thanked the SA leader for his "immeasurable services rendered to the National Socialist movement and to the German people".

However, the increasingly strident demands of the SA, by now four million strong, were putting pressure on the Führer.

On June 4, 1934 Hitler sent for Röhm and warned him not to start a 'Second Revolution', the socialist course favoured by Röhm and Hitler's rival Gregor Strasser. The two friends talked for five hours. Hitler assured Röhm that he had no plans to disband the SA. Two months later the Führer ordered the Brown Shirts on a month's leave during which time no uniforms were to be worn.

Pressure on Hitler to deal with the unruly masses of the

SA was increasing. On June 10 Deputy Chancellor von Papen made a speech at Marburg University denouncing the methods of the Nazis, including their violation of human rights and their anti-Christianity.

A purge of the SA would be seen as eliminating those men most guilty of past excesses. Goering, Blomberg, Himmler, Heydrich, Best of the SD in southern Germany, Lutze and others all prepared lists – one of which was based on Röhm's own list of SA officers due for promotion.

On June 26 SS and SD officers were warned by Himmler of an impending SA revolt. A day later Sepp-Dietrich, commanding *Leibstandarte-SS* Adolf Hitler (Hitler's SS body guard) collected extra weapons and transport from the Army HQ in Berlin.

On June 29 the *Völkischer Beobachter* published an article

by defence minister von Blomberg pledging the Army's loyalty to Hitler, and requesting curbs on the SA. In Berlin, Goering mobilised the police and SS. Hitler with Goebbels visited a labour camp and then went to his old haunt of Bad Godesberg near Bonn.

The purge which followed came to be known as the 'Night of the Long Knives', the 'Blood Purge' or the 'Röhm Purge'. Early in the morning of 30 June, the SS was unleashed and the senior leadership of the SA was arrested.

Röhm's Avengers

At the end of 1934 and early in 1935 a secret group of SA men called "Röhm's Avengers" hunted down at least 155 SS men who had been involved in the purge and killed them. The group identified themselves by a slip of paper pinned to the body of each victim.



Above: Röhm's relations with his Party rivals appeared friendly. But Goering, Goebbels and Himmler saw the SA man as a threat to their own powerbases – encouraging these natural enemies to work together. They fabricated the news of the SA plot which decided Röhm's fate.

Below: Hitler used his private Ju 52 airliner to swoop down on Munich without warning, making a pre-emptive strike against the unsuspecting Röhm.



Blood Purge

Below: Hitler confers with senior SS officers, including Joseph 'Sepp' Dietrich (centre). As commander of Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler, Dietrich was to play a major part in the night of the long knives, and was present at Röhm's death.



ON 30 JUNE 1934, Hitler flew to Munich and then travelled by car to the resort of Bad Wiessee on the shores of the Tegernsee. Here, at the Hanselbauer Sanatorium, Röhm and senior SA leaders were on leave. Röhm was in bed asleep when Hitler arrived at the hotel. Hitler banged on the door and when the befuddled SA leader asked whom it was the Führer replied "It is I, Hitler. Open up!" As he opened the door the unsuspecting Röhm muttered "Already? I wasn't expecting you until tomorrow".

On Hitler's orders, SS men arrested Röhm and dragged him protesting along with other SA leaders to the waiting vehicles. In an adjoining room Röhm's close friend *Obergruppenführer* Edmund Heines was found in bed with his youthful chauffeur. Enraged, Hitler ordered the

"ruthless extermination of this pestilential tumour". The two men were dragged from the room and shot – the first victims of the purge.

Röhm was taken to Stadelheim prison in Munich where on Hitler's orders he was given a pistol and five minutes to "take the honourable course" and commit suicide. There are conflicting versions of his last hours. One has it that Röhm said that if he was to die Hitler should be his executioner, while another that Röhm was still confused and asked to see Hitler to discuss what was happening.

On Sunday July 1 Hitler attended a public function and gave instructions that Röhm was to be killed. Acting on orders from Sepp Dietrich, a squad of SS men led by Theodore Eicke entered Röhm's cell and shot him dead.



Desert



In many ways, the North African campaign was a sideshow for the Germans. But it was in the desert sands that the first missteps in Germany's march to triumph were to be made.

HITLER'S MOST implacable enemy, Winston Churchill, recognized the Nazis for what they were long before other British political leaders. He sensed the evil at the heart of Nazism; that it was not just another right-wing regime, but a deadly threat to the civilized world. All the more remarkable then, that Churchill, speaking in the Commons, once described one of Hitler's favourite commanders as 'a very daring and skilful opponent... and, may I say across the havoc of war, a great general'. The officer he praised then is probably the only one of Hitler's officers whose name is still remembered in Britain today. He was Erwin

Rommel, the 'Desert Fox', whose Afrika Korps fought British and Commonwealth forces in North Africa from February 1941 to May 1943: over two years of cut and thrust battles, mostly in the Libyan desert, an area aptly described as a tactician's paradise and a quartermaster's nightmare.

ITALIAN DISASTER

The war in North Africa began in earnest on 9 December 1940. Italy had shipped some 200,000 men to its colony of Libya, seized from the Turks in 1912. The Italian 10th Army, under General Graziani, assembled near the frontier of Egypt, then defended by just 40,000 British and Commonwealth troops. To the south-east were another

250,000 Italian troops in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and Eritrea. At stake was the Suez canal, strategically vital to the British. The 10th Army invaded Egypt in September, but stopped after only 100 km and dug itself into a series of entrenched camps. The canal lay another 500 km to the east.

The British commander-in-chief, General Wavell, retaliated with two divisions, christened the 'Western Desert Force'. Led by Lieutenant-General Richard O'Connor, the 4th Indian division and 7th Armoured division (the 'Desert Rats') launched a five-day raid to put the enemy off balance. It did rather more than that. The Italians collapsed, some 20,000 surrendering in the first 24 hours. They were driven back

War

The German expeditionary force to North Africa was not large, but under the command of Erwin Rommel it was to have an effect out of all proportion to its size.

Right: The German troops in North Africa were veterans, proven in battle. To the British, who had swept far larger Italian units aside with almost contemptuous ease, the fast-moving, hard-hitting Afrika Korps would come as a severe shock.



"In view of the tenseness of the situation, and the sluggishness of the Italian command, I decided to ignore my orders and to take command at the front with my own hands as soon as possible – at the very latest after the arrival of the first German units."

**Generalleutnant
Erwin Rommel
The Rommel Papers**

into Cyrenaica (eastern Libya) and back along the coast road. The British kept going, leap-frogging around the retreating Italians and compelling more to lay down their arms. The port of Tobruk fell on 22 January. By early February the British had reached El Agheila, over 800 km from their startline. Men were exhausted, vehicles run into the ground by the pace of the operation. But for less than 2,000 casualties, the Western Desert Force had taken 130,000 prisoners-of-war, wiping eight divisions from the Italian order of battle.

The fruits of this stunning victory were thrown away. General Wavell decided against a further attack on the Italians, one that might have seen the

surrender of all Libya. British reinforcements were diverted to the doomed intervention in Greece. The 7th Armoured division was withdrawn to refit in Egypt, its place taken by the inexperienced 2nd Armoured division, which had one of its tank brigades sent to Greece. It was at this point that Rommel entered the stage.

ROMMEL ARRIVES

On 14 February 1941 he landed in North Africa to lead a German expeditionary force, rushed across the sea to prevent the total loss of Libya. His orders were to stabilize the situation. But within days, Rommel was planning nothing less than a full-scale counter-attack.

Rommel flew back to Berlin

on 19 March to request permission to attack. It was denied. He attacked anyway, sending the 5th Light division to assault Mersa Brega, just east of El Agheila. The British occupied a 12 km front with one flank resting on a marsh, the other on the Mediterranean coast. What followed set the pattern for the next year. The aggressive and skilful German attack was halted by a very bloody-minded defence, the situation still in the balance by late afternoon. The British infantry and artillery holding the position were exhausted, their opponents equally disorganized. The moment was ripe for an armoured counter-attack, but the British tank commander decided there was too little daylight left

HITLER'S BATTLES 8



and refused to intervene. The British withdrew during the night, enabling the equally battered Germans to pass through the defile and into the open desert. Free to manoeuvre there, Rommel pushed his reinforcements forward. With numerical, and, more importantly, psychological advantage, the Germans surged east. A helter-skelter retreat ensued, British and German units frequently intermingled. With dreadful luck, Lt.-General O'Connor was captured when his staff car ran into a German patrol. This removed the only British general in Africa who had shown a flair for armoured warfare. One who had not, the CO of 2nd Armoured, was captured too when the garrison of Mechili surrendered. Only the commander of the 9th Australian division escaped the prison cage.

Rommel's headlong advance recovered all the territory lost by the Italians. He was soon talking to his staff about Egypt and the Suez canal. However, before we examine his first attack in that direction, the so-called 'dash to the wire', it is worth noting that the Axis forces in North Africa remained under Italian command until early 1943. Rommel was a corps and latterly army commander, but the superior officer in Africa was Italian. The majority of Rommel's troops were Italian. Most of their supplies came from Italy in Italian ships. And there was the problem. The Royal Navy attacked the Italian convoys with merciless professionalism, cruiser and destroyer squadrons sortieing from Egypt, submarines from the island of Malta which lay conveniently astride the convoy routes. By the end of

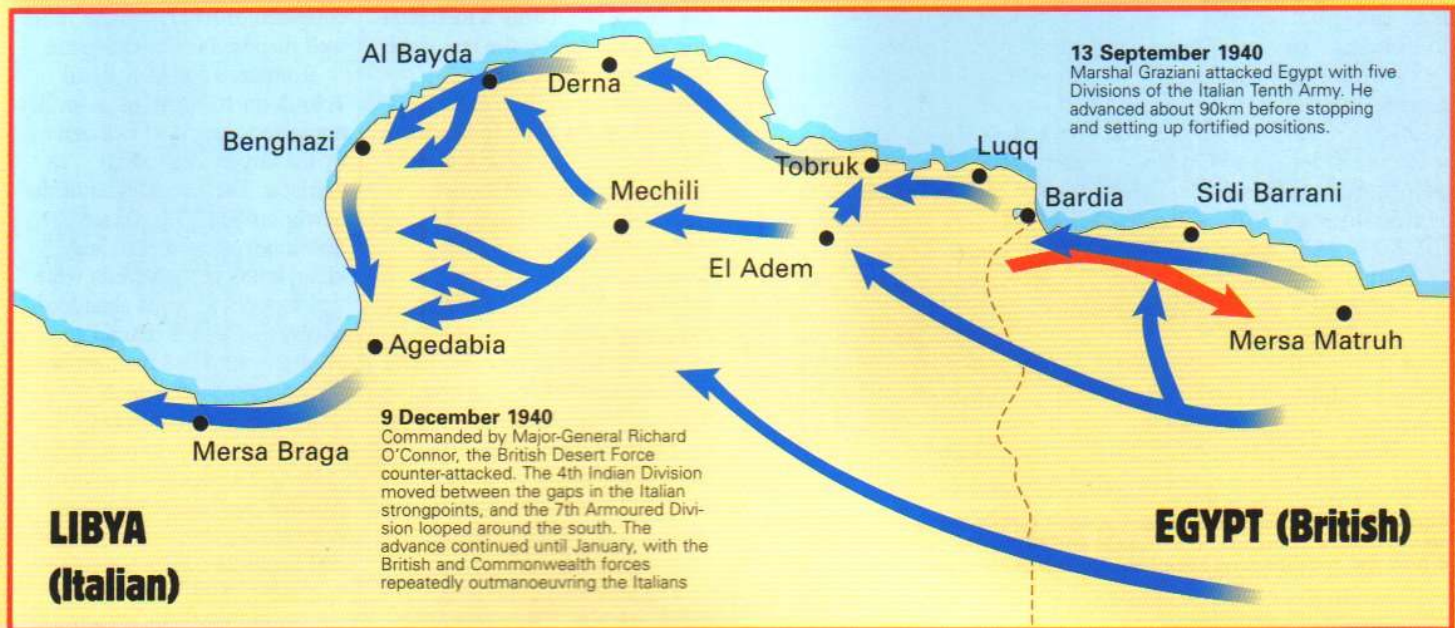


Above: A German 10.5-cm light field howitzer fires on Australian positions around Tobruk during Rommel's first offensive. The capture of the strategically-located port became something of an obsession with the German commander.

Below: Italian infantrymen advance, covered by an Autoblinda 41 armoured car. Although the Italian army had been smashed by the British at the beginning of the campaign, its best units were to prove effective under Rommel's capable direction.



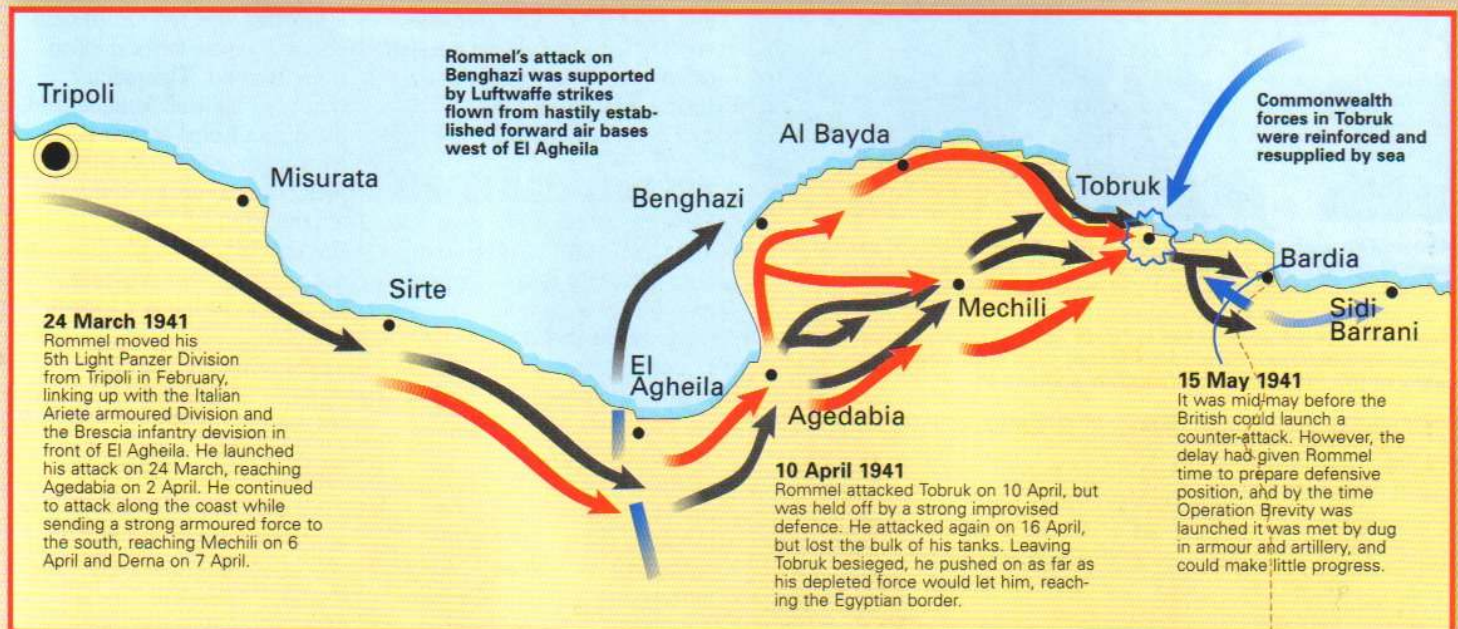
Italian disaster 13 Sept 40 - 7 Feb 41



ITALY INVADED EGYPT on 13 September, 1941, but without any great verve. By December they had penetrated a few miles over the border, but were not ready for the British counterattack which came on 9 December. Outnumbered three to one, the British smashed the Italians in just four days: for just 600 casualties they

had captured almost 40,000 soldiers, 240 guns and 70 tanks. Keeping up the momentum, they swept through Cyrenaica. In a ten week campaign, 31,000 British troops inflicted 38,000 casualties on the Italians, and captured 130,000. If Mussolini's army was to survive, it would need help from Germany.

Rommel's riposte 31 Mar 41 - 15 May 41



COMMONWEALTH FORCES in North Africa were sadly depleted, in part by men and equipment worn-out in the headlong advance against the Italians, but also by the calls for reinforcements to be sent to Greece and Crete. Since Rommel had only one of his two Panzer divisions ashore, British General

Wavell did not expect an immediate attack. However, he did not know Rommel. Seeing the British weakness, Rommel decided to attack. His aim was to recover Cyrenaica and to drive on Egypt. Launching his attack on 23 March, he recovered most of the British gains in a lightning month-long campaign.



Above: A British Vickers light tank speeds across the desert. North Africa placed unique demands on weapons and machinery, and both the British and the Germans struggled to keep armour serviceable.



Above: The wide open spaces of the desert offered almost perfect tank warfare terrain, but they also gave anti-tank gunners like these Italians the chance to engage the enemy at maximum range.

Below: British prisoners taken in North Africa. The desert war was generally fought in a chivalrous manner, with both sides respecting their opponents and treating their captives honourably.



1942 Italy had hardly a merchant ship left in service; the rest were on the bottom of the Mediterranean.

Much as they would like to, German commanders could not simply override their Italian allies. Under Rommel's leadership several Italian divisions, notably the Ariete armoured division and Trieste motorized division fought extremely well. (Ironically, as he joked to their officers on more than one occasion, Rommel won his *Pour le mérite* against the Italians at Longarone in 1917). But there was no doubting a general lack of enthusiasm for the war among Italian conscripts.

The desert war was unusual in many respects. There were few cities, few obstacles to the rapid movement of mechanized forces. Armies required vast quantities of petrol and water. Supplies of fresh vegetables and fruit were scarce for both sides. Rommel insisted on eating the same rations as his men and his health steadily deteriorated as a result. His officers fell by the wayside too. The future General-major von Mellethin served on the staff of *Panzergruppe Afrika* until evacuated with amoebic dysentery late in 1942.

HOT DAYS, COLD NIGHTS

Daytime temperatures were often more than 110°F. Nights were always bitterly cold and winter days often far from the popular image of the desert war: O'Connor's men fought their final battles in January 1941 wearing thick army greatcoats. The great British counter-offensive that ended 1941 began in a rainstorm that caused extensive flooding along the battlefield. Yet if the climate was unforgiving, the conventions of the desert war harked back to more civilized days. Rommel was a star in the Nazi propaganda machine, yet had no time for the ideology of the *ubermensch*. There were no SS units in Africa, no murdering *einsatzgruppen*, and the civilian population, such as it was,

consisted of Arab nomads, often well disposed to the Germans.

Rommel's forces reached Tobruk on 10 April, but a hastily-organized assault was beaten off by the largely Australian garrison. The commander of the newly-arrived 15th panzer division was ambushed and killed when he drove into what was thought to be an abandoned enemy position. Rommel's offensive attracted the interest of the General Staff, which despatched *Generaloberst* Friederich Paulus to investigate. He was not impressed, describing Rommel as 'headstrong' and highlighting the danger that what had begun as a sideshow could become a major drain on resources just as the invasion of Russia was about to begin.

BRITISH ATTACKS

Arguments about German offensive aims in Africa were rendered academic by a succession of British attacks. In May, General Wavell launched 'Operation Brevity' which was defeated. In June they tried again, this time reinforced with nearly 300 new tanks shipped from England. 'Operation Battleaxe' showed Rommel and the Afrika Korps at their best. British armoured units tried to seek out and engage Rommel's armour in a tank v. tank battle. But the Germans made masterful use of their towed anti-tank guns, firing from well concealed positions and inflicting terrible losses before the panzers wheeled in from a flank to finish the business.

TANK DESTROYERS

The Luftwaffe's 8.8-cm anti-aircraft guns were pressed into service in the ground role since the army's standard 3.7-cm weapon could not penetrate British 'infantry' tanks, the Matilda and Valentine. It speaks volumes that the British had a similar weapon available, the equally high velocity 3.7-in (93-mm) anti-aircraft gun; but lack of imagination and inter-service squabbling prevented them from

The Desert Fox

Rommel, like other German Panzer commanders, was not content to sit in his headquarters far to the rear. He preferred being well forward, relying on radio communications to keep up with the big picture. While undoubtedly good for the morale of the men that he led, most military historians now consider that for all of his brilliance that command style was a weakness which hindered control of his widely dispersed forces.



ERWIN ROMMEL was young for his rank, and had never served on the General Staff. As a result, he was not really trusted by the staff officers who ran the German army. He had originally trained as an infantryman, with little armoured experience before commanding the 7th Panzer Division in the French campaign. But from his earliest days he had been an apostle of the doctrine of speed and manoeuvrability, and his mastery of small unit infantry tactics quickly became a mastery of mobile warfare on a larger scale.

It was obvious to the new German commander that mobility was even more vital in the desert than it had been in France. Leading from the front, he launched his first offensive little more than a month after first setting foot in Tripoli, and he caught General Wavell and the overextended British and Commonwealth forces completely by surprise. It would not be the last time he would do that.

Below: Rommel confers with senior Italian officers at the British strongpoint of Tobruk. Rommel decided to bypass and isolate the port in his first offensive – a mistake which he would take more than a year to rectify.





A Panzer III speeds through the desert. At the start of the campaign, German tank forces were much better tactically than their opponents.

using it the way the Germans employed their '88'.

In three days' fighting, designated the battle of Sollum by the Germans, the Afrika Korps demonstrated its superior leadership and vastly better staffwork. Wavell was sacked and replaced by General Auchinleck, who was pressed by London to renew the attack and relieve Tobruk, still besieged by the Axis forces. Both sides sent reinforcements, but Germany had little to spare as the invasion of the USSR was now in full swing. Rommel developed jaundice in August, but soldiered on, his forces now designated *Panzergruppe Afrika*.

TARGET: TOBRUK

Under his command were two panzer divisions, the 15th and 21st (formerly the 5th Light division) and the Afrika division (later, the 90th Light division) assembled from various other units. The Italian XX Armoured Corps (Ariete and Trieste divisions) and XXI Corps (four non-motorized infantry divisions) plus the Savona division gave Rommel a total of ten divisions at his command. Tobruk was the key: by capturing the port, Rommel would get his supplies landed just behind the front, instead of having them driven

hundreds of kilometres of coast road from Benghazi.

Thanks to the ULTRA code-breakers Britain knew all about Rommel's plans for Tobruk. Auchinleck staged his own offensive days before of Rommel's planned assault. On 17 November Rommel's signals staff reported 'complete English radio silence'. He ignored them, and ignored the first reports of a major British attack.

The British Eighth Army under Lt-General Cunningham advanced to relieve Tobruk, its powerful tank force surging across the desert to find and destroy the German armour. On 19 November, the key airfield at Sidi Rezegh was overrun by British tanks. Rommel was

reluctant to abandon his own attack on Tobruk, but when he reacted, he did so with his usual vigour. Fighting raged around Sidi Rezegh until 23 November, both sides manoeuvring aggressively in the open terrain. There was no real frontline. Both sides had headquarters units and supply columns taken by surprise by enemy tanks. Both sides suffered heavily, but had only a hazy idea of enemy losses. In such a battle, psychological strength is a priceless asset.

On 24 November Rommel struck out behind the British, heading for the Egyptian frontier rather than beat back the British assault along the coast road that was poised to relieve Tobruk. Cunningham, who had only

narrowly avoided capture in the chaotic battle, was sacked by Auchinleck who placed his own chief-of-staff, Lt-General Ritchie in command of the Eighth Army. Rommel's 'dash to the wire' failed to relieve the small garrisons left in the wake of the British advance; his own staff regarded it as premature, and it was ended by *Oberstleutnant* Westphal at Rommel's HQ who ordered the 21st panzer division back to Tobruk on his own initiative. Rommel remained out of touch for several days, as he raced around the battlefield micro-managing the operation.

SETBACK FOR ROMMEL

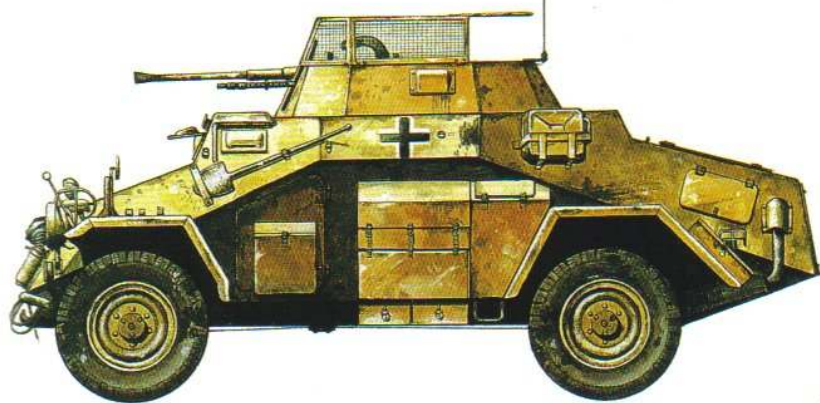
Rommel admitted defeat and fell back towards Gazala. Tobruk was relieved and by the end of the year the Germans had abandoned Benghazi again. The situation seemed a repeat of nine months earlier: the victorious British scattered and disorganized after a long advance, the enemy pushed back deep into his own territory. But, it would soon be shown, the Afrika Korps had recoiled like a spring.

By January 1942 it was ready to be unleashed. The 'Benghazi handicap', as some wags had dubbed it, was not over yet.

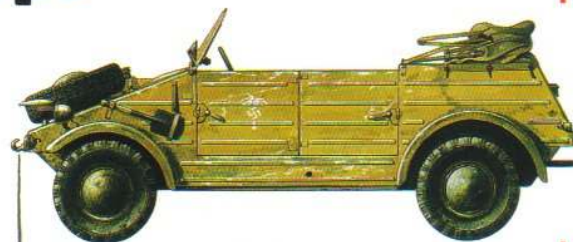
Heavily armoured British Valentine tanks burn after being engaged by German 'Eighty-Eight' flak guns.



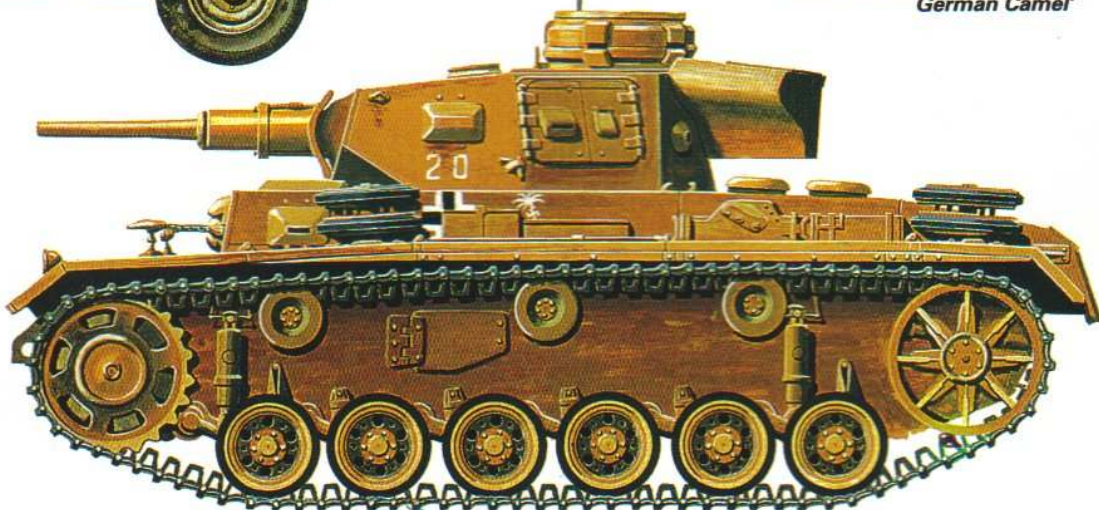
Vehicles of the Afrika Korps



Above: The SdKfz 222 served with Afrika Korps reconnaissance units. Armed with a 20-mm cannon, its major flaw was lack of range: it could only manage about 140 km cross-country on a tank of fuel.



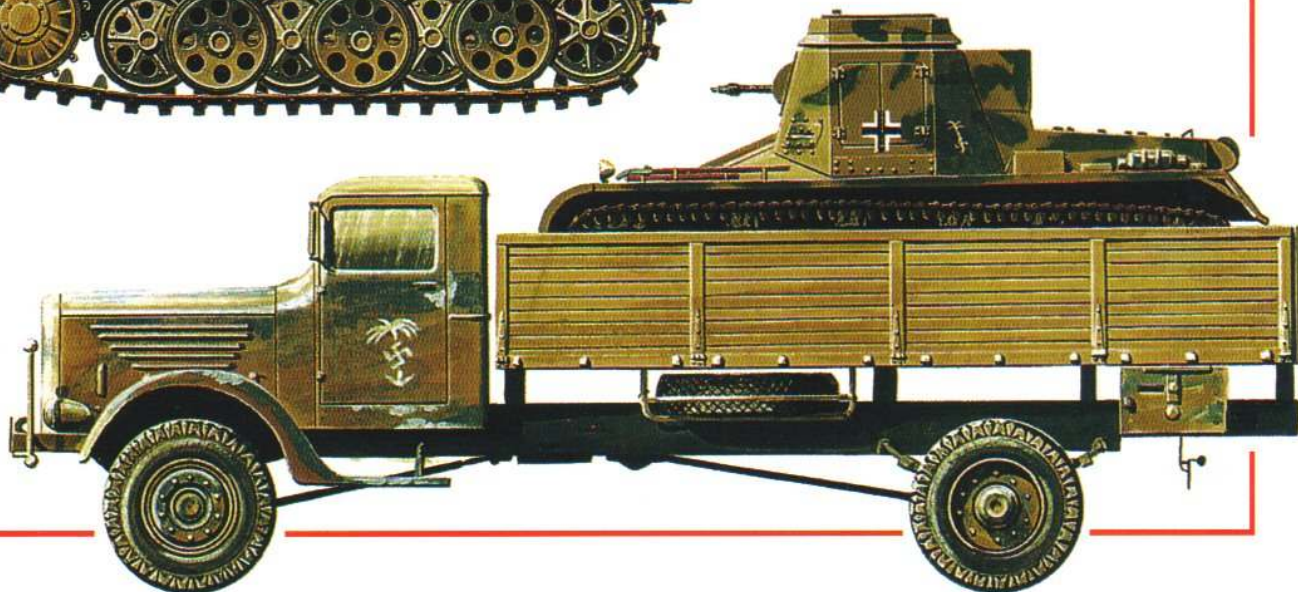
Above: The little Kubel was based on the pre-war Volkswagen. Early versions suffered in the desert, but with modifications proved reliable enough to be nicknamed 'The German Camel'.



Right: The PzKpfw III was the mainstay of Afrika Korps panzer formations all through the war in the desert. Originally armed with a 37-mm gun, later models were fitted with a 50-mm weapon, making it more powerfully armed as well as better armoured than the British Cruiser tanks it encountered.



Left: Half-tracks were designed primarily as tractors for field artillery pieces. In the desert, however, their mobility over the sand made them useful in many other roles. Vehicles like this SdKfz 11 three-tonner were used to carry troops, supplies and ammunition as well as to tow light howitzers and anti-tank guns.



Right: A small number of Büssing-Nag 4x4 heavy trucks were used in North Africa: this example is carrying a PzKpf I command tank. However, German trucks were less reliable under harsh conditions than those of their opponents, and the Afrika Korps made extensive use of captured British and American-built vehicles.



Anti-tank Weapons



Fierce armoured combat on the Eastern Front made development of effective anti-tank guns a vital task. The advanced PaK 41 had a tapering bore, which accelerated projectiles to very high velocity and gave it excellent tank-killing capability. But it was very expensive to manufacture.

JUST AS every German tank was a Tiger for many Allied soldiers, so every anti-tank gun was an 'Eighty Eight'. One of the great artillery weapons of all time, the 8.8-cm anti-aircraft gun was certainly a tank killer of note. But it was not the only such weapon in the Wehrmacht's armoury, nor even the most numerous.

German troops used a wide variety of anti-tank weapons during the war, some captured

from the enemy and others of futuristic design.

In 1939 the standard anti-tank gun with which the German Army went to war was the 3.7 cm PaK 35/36. PaK was the standard abbreviation for *PanzerabwehrKanone*, or anti-tank gun. Small, light, and relatively easy to handle, the PaK 35 was far from ideal for dealing with the larger and more powerful armoured vehicles then coming into service. Indeed, its crews ruefully called it the 'door knocker' because of

its poor performance. Attempts to enhance penetration included the use of tungsten shot and a fin-stabilised muzzle-loaded hollow charge grenade, the *Stielgranate* 41.

The PaK 35 had a maximum range with HE ammunition of 4,025 metres, and could penetrate 36 mm of armour at 30° at 500 metres with conventional ammunition or 180 mm at 300 metres with the *Stielgranate* 41. Over 20,000 guns were built during the war.

Aware of the deficiencies of

the PaK 35/36 the German Army demanded a larger calibre weapon. Developed from 1938, the 5 cm PaK 38 entered service late in 1940. The PaK 38 had a maximum range of 2,652 metres with HE ammunition. With tungsten shot it could pierce 55 mm of armour at 1,000 metres.

The appearance of heavily armoured Soviet T-34 and KV-1 tanks gave new urgency to anti-tank gun design, and two new 7.5 cm guns were developed, the PaK 40 being manufactured by Rheinmetall-Borsig and the PaK

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



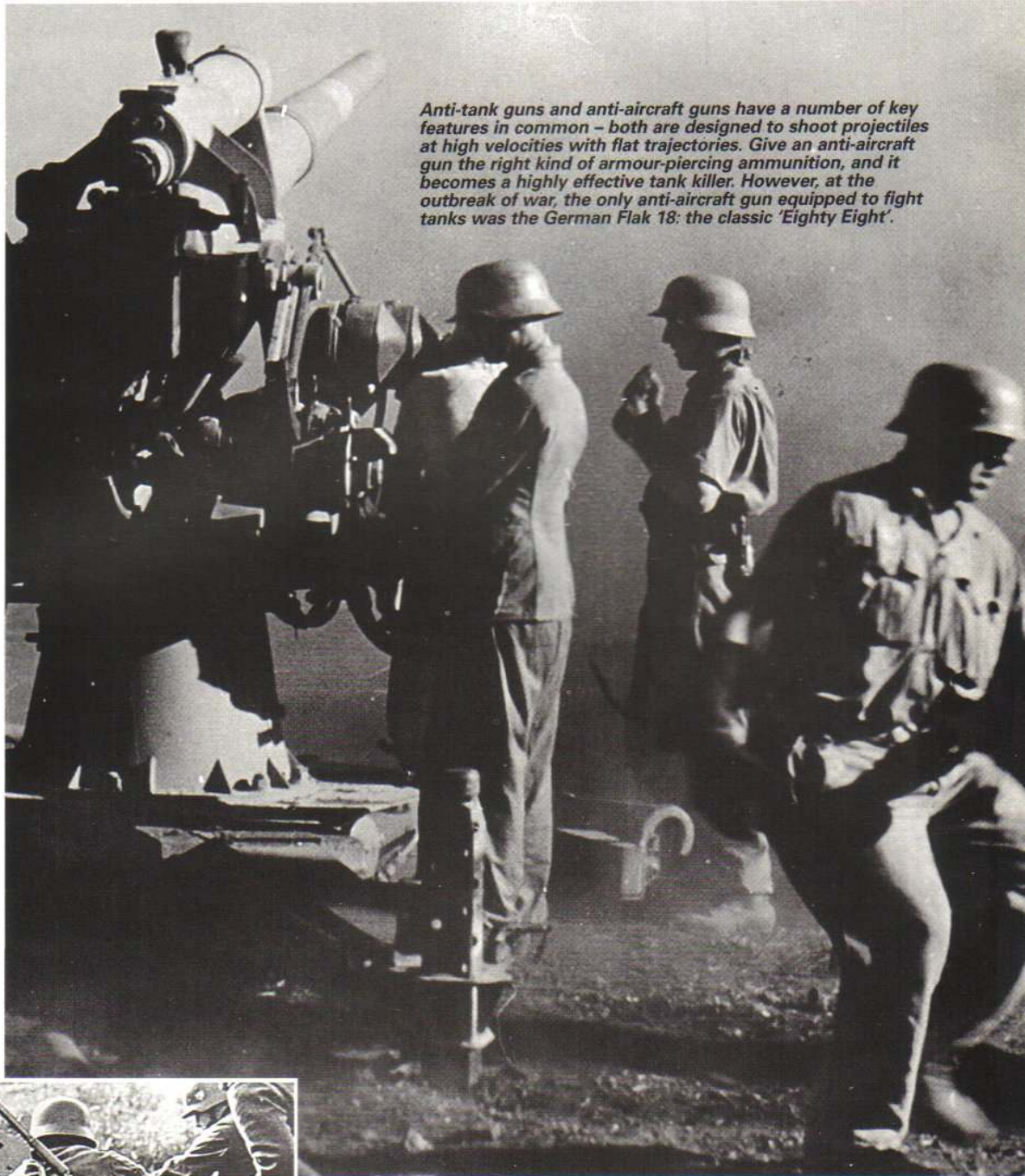
"The Pak 43 was a bastard to handle in mud. We had only one rule as the spring rains approached: don't move! Prepare your gun position to meet any Red Army attack!"

**Obersturmbannführer
Gunter Windlich
SS Division Das Reich**

41 produced by Krupp entered service. Both were fairly powerful, though the PaK 40 was effectively a scaled up version of the PaK 38, and the more advanced PaK 41 was a superior weapon. The Krupp design was one of the first 'cone' or 'squeeze bore' weapons to enter service. The internal bore of the barrel tapered slightly from breech to muzzle. The pressure behind the *Pzgr Patr 41 (HK)* tungsten shot increased as it travelled down the barrel, and it emerged with a muzzle velocity of 1,125 m/s.

The shell consisted of a light ballistic cap, behind which was a tungsten carbide shot. The shot was enclosed in an outer case

The standard German anti-tank gun at the outbreak of war was the 3.7-cm Pak 35. Designed in the 1920s, it was a light and handy weapon, though in 1940 its crews found that it could not deal with the thick armour of British and French infantry tanks.



Anti-tank guns and anti-aircraft guns have a number of key features in common – both are designed to shoot projectiles at high velocities with flat trajectories. Give an anti-aircraft gun the right kind of armour-piercing ammunition, and it becomes a highly effective tank killer. However, at the outbreak of war, the only anti-aircraft gun equipped to fight tanks was the German Flak 18: the classic 'Eighty Eight'.



with flanges at the centre and base. The flanges were compressed as the shell passed along the barrel.

The penetrative power of the advanced new weapon was remarkable; the PaK 41 could punch through 145 mm of armour at a range of 1,000 metres. Fortunately for the Allies there was a shortage of tungsten in Germany. Another problem was barrel wear: the high pressures meant that the gun tube

had to be replaced every 500 rounds. Eventually only 150 PaK 41s were built.

The Germans experimented with two more tapered bore guns during the war. The little sPz B 41 which entered service in 1942 was regarded by the German Army as a heavy anti-tank rifle rather than a gun. It fired a 2.8 cm shot through a barrel which tapered from 28 mm at the breech to 20 mm at the muzzle which produced an awesome

The fearsome 'Eighty-Eight'

SENT TO protect German forces fighting in Spain, early 'Eighty Eights' were pressed into service in the ground role. The Flak 18 proved devastatingly effective against the light armoured vehicles of the period. As a result, armour-piercing ammunition became a standard item in the inventory of all German Flak batteries.

This was to prove useful in the early years of World War II, since the 8.8-cm anti-aircraft gun was the only weapon that could easily stop heavily armoured tanks like the British Matilda, the French Char B and the Soviet KV-1. The Flak 18 was followed into service by the improved Flak 36, 37 and 41, the latter largely a new design.

Useful though the anti-aircraft guns were, they were far from perfect in the anti-tank role since they were bulky, were difficult to camouflage, and were very slow to get into action. The Eighty Eight could be fired from its wheeled transport carriage in an emergency, but for maximum accuracy it had to be lowered onto a firing platform, which was a time-consuming process.

The first purely anti-tank version entered service late in 1943. The PaK 43/41 used the barrel and breech of the Flak 41, much modified for anti-tank work, and fired an entirely new range of ammunition.

Right: Although dedicated anti-tank versions existed, the Flak version was used against tanks up to the end of the War.



These anti-tank 'Eighty-Eights' were mounted on the carriage of a 10.5 cm light field howitzer with the wheels from a 15 cm medium/heavy howitzer. At nearly five tonnes it was a brute to handle – its crews called it the *Scheunentor* or 'Barn door' – but it had a much lower profile than the Flak versions. It kept all of the power of the earlier guns. It was used on both the Eastern and Western fronts.

The 8.8 cm PaK 43 which entered service at about the same time was less mobile than the PaK 43/41, being mounted on a modified version of the Flak carriage, and it still needed to be dismounted from its wheels for maximum accuracy. However, once this had been done the gun presented a very low profile – when dug in it was only 1.5 metres high. In combat it proved to be one of the best anti-armour weapons of the war, capable of destroying any Allied tank at ranges of at least 2 kilometres.



Above: First used against tanks during the Spanish Civil War, the 8.8-cm Flak gun was one of the weapons most feared by British and American troops in North Africa and Italy.

muzzle velocity of 1,402 m/s and a maximum range of 1,000 metres. The airborne version, the sPzB 41 *le Feldlafette* 41, weighed only 118 kg in action, but along with the standard version it could penetrate 50 mm of armour at 30° at 500 metres.

The 4.2 cm PaK 41 looked at first glance like the PaK 35/36 with a longer barrel. The bore in fact tapered from 4.2 cm down to 2.8 cm. It had a maximum range

of 1,000 metres and could penetrate 70 mm of armour at 30° at 500 metres and 50 mm at 1,000 metres. It was not widely used, but is known to have been issued to some parachute divisions in 1942-43.

In 1944 Rheinmetall developed the 8 cm PaW 600, a muzzle loaded weapon which fired a fin-stabilised 2.7 kg hollow-charge projectile. This was a very advanced concept for

the time, but though it could penetrate 140 mm of armour at 30° at 750 metres, it could not engage an enemy much beyond that range.

Given its impact on the battlefield, the family of 8.8-cm guns deserves pride of place in any study of German anti-tank weapons. Known as the 'Eighty Eight' to its opponents and the *Acht-Acht* to its crews, the original 8.8 cm Flak 18 was an anti-aircraft gun which had been designed in 1931 in Sweden. A team of engineers from Krupp worked secretly with Bofors to get around the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles.

FAMILY OF KILLERS

The 'Eighty-Eight' served as the basis for a whole series of tank guns and anti-tank guns as well as in its original role as an anti-aircraft weapon.

However, as the war progressed even these superb weapons were being faced with challenging new targets. Powerful Soviet tanks like the Josef Stalin (IS) 1 and 2 had larger, hard hitting guns and much thicker armour than the T-

34. A bigger gun was needed to counter them and in 1943 Krupp and Rheinmetall began work on a dual-purpose anti-tank/field gun of 12.8 cm calibre.



The PaK 44 saw only limited service before the war ended. Fifty one examples were produced, mounted on an improvised carriage taken from a French 155-mm gun. Firing Pzgr 43 shot the PaK 44 had a muzzle velocity of 1,000 m/s and could penetrate 230 mm of armour angled at 30° at a range of 1,000 metres.

Driven by desperate need, by the end of the war German



engineers were pushing the boundaries of artillery design. They developed automatic loaders for 7.5 cm and 8.8 cm guns, and experimented with infrared sights to allow them to be used at night. Ammunition developments included the use of

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



SPECIFICATION

Flak 18/41

Early versions had an MV (muzzle velocity) of 795 m/s (metres a second) with armour piercing (AP) ammunition, and a maximum horizontal range of 14,813 metres. The Flak 41 pushed the muzzle velocity up to 1,000 m/s and could reach out to 19,730 metres.

Left: The key to the success of the Eighty-Eight was the very high velocity of its shells. It could damage most Allied tanks even when firing high explosive rounds, and with armour-piercing shot it was lethal. Curiously, the Germans were the only nation which used heavy dual-purpose weapons: most Allied armies had comparable anti-aircraft guns, but these were never used to engage ground targets.

Apart from an added muzzle brake, The barrel of the PaK 43 was the same as the Flak gun from which it was derived, but it was fitted with a much simplified breech mechanism.

SPECIFICATION

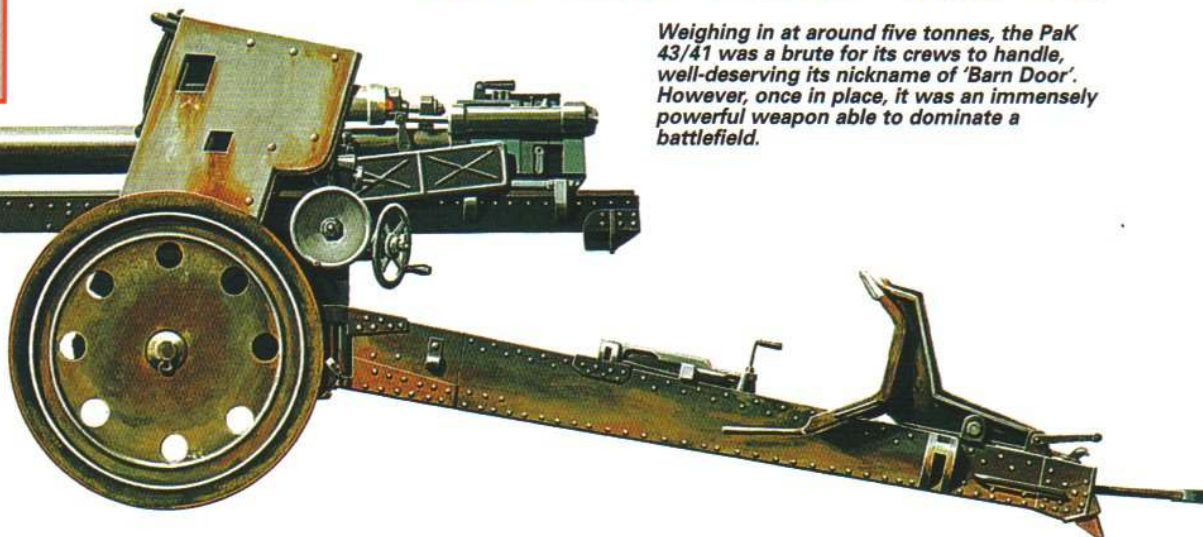
PaK 43

Firing Pzgr 40/43 tungsten AP shot the PaK 43 had an increased muzzle velocity of 1,130 m/s, allowing a maximum range with High Explosive (HE) ammunition of 17,500 metres. With AP ammunition it could penetrate 182 mm of armour at 30° at 500 metres and 136 mm at 2,000 metres.

For ease of production, the PaK 43 gun tube was fitted to the carriage of the 10.5-cm leFH 18 light field howitzer, with wheels from the 15-cm sFH 18 medium/heavy howitzer.

8.8-cm PaK 43/41

Weighing in at around five tonnes, the PaK 43/41 was a brute for its crews to handle, well-deserving its nickname of 'Barn Door'. However, once in place, it was an immensely powerful weapon able to dominate a battlefield.



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



Above: Toulon, 1944, and French resistance fighters examine a 7.5-cm PaK 40 they have just captured. The PaK 40 was one of the most effective anti-tank guns of the war, and was used on all fronts after its introduction to service late in 1941.

Right: Ideally, anti-tank guns should have a low tactical profile, making them harder to spot by opposing forces. They worked most effectively from ambush, with large numbers of guns surrounding a killing ground into which the enemy is lured.

steel and plastic for shell cases, to save brass.

Through their campaigns in Europe and Russia the German Army had captured vast numbers of guns and vehicles and these were pressed into use as the war swung against them. Among this booty were Soviet M 1936 or M 1939 76.2 mm field guns, nicknamed 'Ratsch Boom' by the Germans for their distinctive sound when they fired.

SKODA GUNS

The Germans also used the Czech manufactured 47 mm Skoda anti-tank gun which they had acquired with the annexation of 1939. It was designated the 4.7 cm PaK 36 (t). It weighed 400 kg in action and fired 1.45 kg AP shot at a muzzle velocity of 900 m/s and could penetrate 51 mm of armour at 500 metres.

Another piece which was 'acquired' from Austria and captured from the Poles and Dutch was the Austrian 47 mm Bohler AT gun. In German service it was known as the 4.7 cm PaK (Bohler) and was issued to mountain divisions.

INFANTRY WEAPONS

German infantry entered the war with two 7.92 mm anti-tank rifles, the PzB 38 and PzB 39, however along with the 20 mm PzB 41 they were not effective against the thicker armour of modern tanks. There was even a small shaped charge projectile which could be fired from the Walther 27 mm flare pistol, though it was described as "very much a last ditch, inaccurate and ineffective weapon".

In 1942 however they received the Panzerfaust or 'armoured fist'

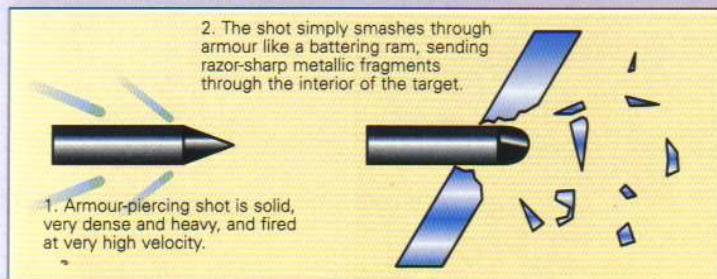


This one shot, hollow charge rocket propelled anti-tank weapon was designed by Dr Heinrich Langweiller at Hugo Schneider AG. Langweiller improved the design, which initially had an effective range of only 30 metres. By the end of the war, the Panzerfaust 100 could hit tanks at 100 metres. The shaped charge warhead of the Panzerfaust 30 could penetrate 140 mm of armour angled at 30°. Later versions, with 15-cm diameter warheads, could penetrate 200 mm at a range of

80 metres. For many Soviet and Allied tank crews the greatest fear was the determined Panzerfaust-armed German infantryman lurking in the ruins or vegetation close to a track or road. The Germans recognised this type of cool courage with special tank destruction badges.

PANZERSCHRECK

In 1942 in North Africa the Germans captured American 'bazooka' 60-mm shoulder fired anti-tank rocket weapons. Some efficient retro-engineering



Smashing through: In concept, armour-piercing shot is exactly the same as the very first cannon balls: solid lumps of metal using kinetic energy to smash through a target. The faster and denser the projectile, the more effect it has.

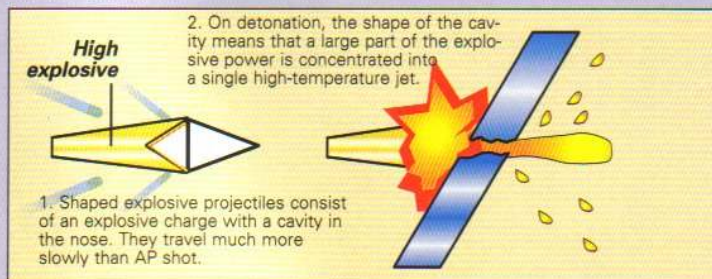
Piercing Metal

THE EFFECTIVENESS of anti-tank guns depends on the velocity at which they can fire projectiles. Before the war, standard armour-piercing shot was a solid chunk of very hard steel which used kinetic energy to punch through armour plate.

The faster shot could be fired, the better, and the heavier the shot the more enemy armour it could penetrate. During World War II, new harder and denser materials began to increase penetrating power. The most effective rounds utilised tungsten.

As the war progressed German industry was increasingly constrained by shortages of wolfram, the ore from which tungsten is extracted. Old-style steel shot was not as dense or as effective, so the military engineers began to look at alternatives.

The most promising was the hollow or shaped charge projectile. This used the Munro principle, in which an explosive covering a hollow metal cone was detonated. The collapsing cone produced a jet of extremely hot gas and molten metal which burned through armour. Unlike more conventional rounds, hollow charge projectiles worked most effectively without spinning, and as a result they were mostly used in slower moving rocket propelled weapons.



Burning through: The shaped-charge effect relies on creating a jet of molten metal which burns through a target's armour into the interior. Penetration increases dramatically with a wider projectile carrying more explosive behind a bigger cavity.



produced the 8.8 cm *Raketen Panzerbuchse* 54. This had an effective range of 120 metres firing a fin stabilised rocket. It delivered a 0.66-kg shaped charge warhead which could penetrate 100 mm of armour. The German propaganda machine called the weapon the *Panzerschreck*, the 'armoured nightmare' or 'armoured battle-axe'. The soldiers who used it, as soldiers will, gave it the descriptive and more mundane name of *Ofenrohr* or 'stovepipe'. Though the launching tube was 1.64 metres long, it weighed only 9.18 kg and consequently was ideal for tank hunters.

CLOSE-RANGE

However, even if the weapon was effective and well designed, it needed a gunner or crew with steady nerves to wait until a tank was within effective range before they opened fire.

On 13 February, 1943 a

20-year old Dutchman single-handedly knocked out 13 Soviet tanks with his French-made PaK 97/38 during an attack in the Lake Ilmen area. Gerardus Mooyman, a volunteer with the *Waffen-SS Freiwilligen-Legion Nederland*, became the first non-German to be awarded the coveted Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

By his own admission however, Gerardus was a rather unenthusiastic soldier and was sulking in a bunker when the Soviet forces attacked. A German officer attached to the Dutch Legion practically dragged him out by his ear and the angry young Dutchman vented his fury on the advancing Soviet armour.

Right: Light, low to the ground and easily handled, the 5-cm PaK 38 was able to knock out Soviet T-34 tanks when firing tungsten-cored shot. However, it was complex and expensive gun to produce, and succeeding designs were much simplified and made less use of light alloys.





NAZI PORCELAIN

The SS had its fingers in many pies, but one of the most unusual was the porcelain factory it owned at Allach, near Dachau.



The figure of Athena, modelled by Professor T.H. Karner, was produced by the Allach factory to commemorate the 'Day of German Art' in Munich in 1938. The box carried a variant of the city's coat of arms, together with the legend 'Munich, Capital of the Movement'.

GERMAN ARTISTS and craftsmen have always been amongst the finest producers of European

porcelain. During the Third Reich, such names as Meissen and Nymphenburg were joined by another producer – SS-Porcelain Allach, located on the outskirts of Munich.

The Allach factory was started in 1933 at the instigation of Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler. Originally privately owned, the Allach Factory was one of the first industrial enterprises taken over by the SS when the 'Black Corps' began building up its economic interests. Unlike other SS businesses, however, it was not transferred to the WVHA, the main economic office of the SS, but remained under the control of Himmler's own office, the *Personlicher Stab, Reichsführer SS*.

With the financial backing of the SS, the Allach factory could attract some of the top craftsmen of the time away from established firms like Rosenthal and Meissen.

DACHAU WORKERS

Later, during the war, the factory was able to make use of its proximity to Dachau concentration camp as a source of cheap labour for heavy manual work. However, the factory was not a slave-labour enterprise like the SS sword maker which was established within Dachau itself.

Allach's output included a large number of Nazi items, but it was far from being the only porcelain factory producing such goods. Commemorative plates, plaques, cups, goblets and statuettes were sold in huge numbers to the general public by all of the major manufacturers.



Above: SS-Porcelain Allach produced a large number of animal figures, dogs being a particular speciality. But dogs were not the only figures produced: this bear is modelled on the animal featured on the coat of arms of the city of Berlin. Such wares were sold to the general public through retailers of fine porcelain



Above: Himmler's personal interests in German and Germanic history encouraged most of the major porcelain factories to produce figures inspired by folklore. This example, produced by the leading firm of Rosenthal in the 1930s, represents a traditional historic figure known as the Bamberg Reiter or the 'Bamberg Rider'. Historic figures were very much in vogue during the early years of the Third Reich, and they sold very well.

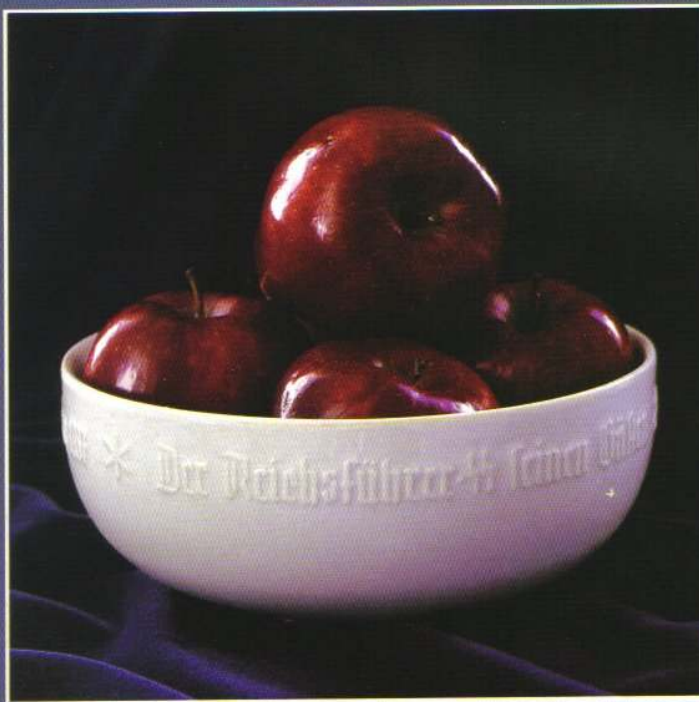


Designed by sculptor Ottmar Obermeier, the Allach figure of 'The Fencer' was one of the few pieces the factory sold with a 'biscuit' or unglazed finish. In 1941, Prague artist painted a portrait of Reinhard Heydrich with an example of the Allach Fencer in the background, as a reference to the SD leader's interest in the sport.



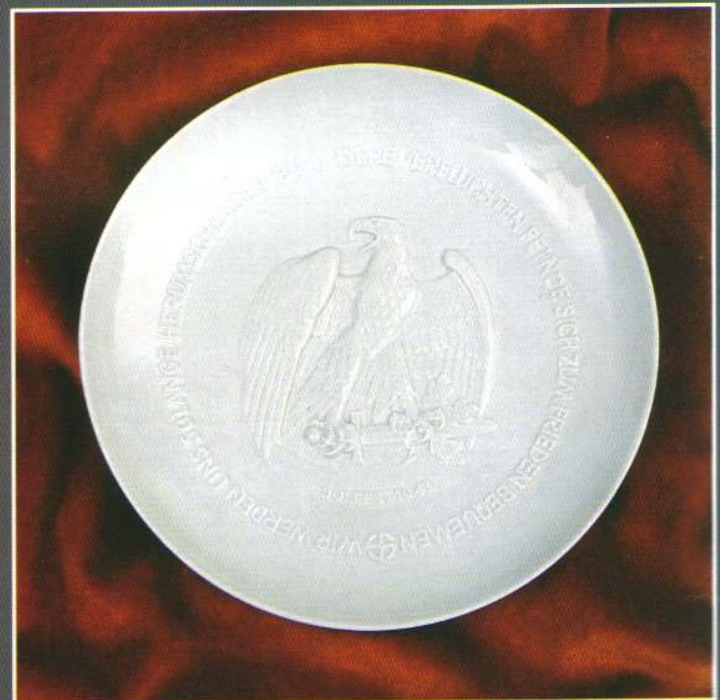
Above: A candlestick designed by Carl Diebitsch for the SS factory is typical of the domestic products produced at Allach. It incorporates a runic sun motif.

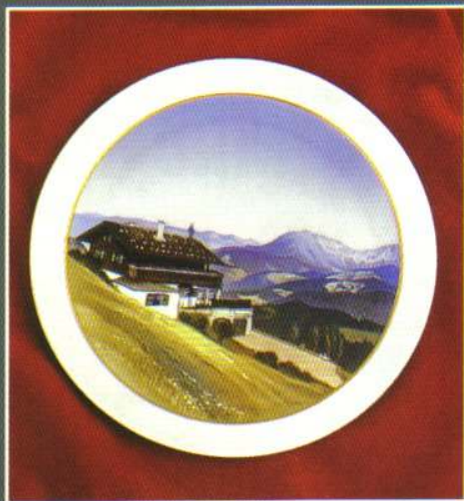
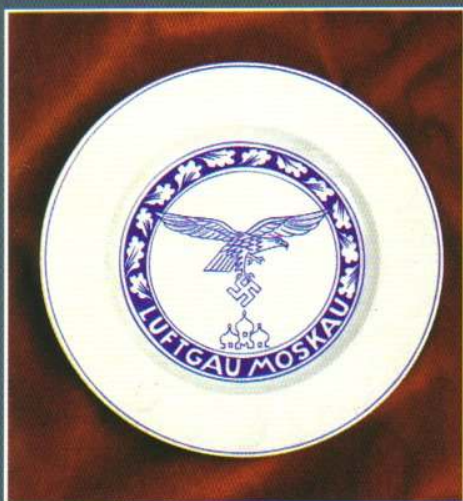
Below: Allach bowl produced for the Reichsführer's guests at the 1937 Reichsparteitag. Apples were much favoured for such bowls: the SS recreation of pagan rituals placed great emphasis on sun worship, and red apples were seen as symbols of the sun.



Above: A flower vase manufactured by the old-established Bavarian firm of Nymphenburg. It was made to commemorate the towns of Pasing, Grosshadern and Feldmoching becoming part of Munich.

Below: An Allach porcelain plate produced as a commemorative item for the Julfest (the pagan Yule festival, celebrated by the SS in place of Christmas.) Manufactured late in 1943, the plate is of very high quality, with the moulded eagle in the centre being particularly fine.





PARTY MEMORIES

From the very beginning of its manufacture in Europe, high-quality china has been used for decoration as much as – if not more than – for eating and drinking. From the 19th century, commemorative porcelain pieces have been manufactured to celebrate great events. With the rise of tourism in the 20th century, a new market opened up with the production of souvenirs and mementos of famous places.

The Third Reich saw the production of large numbers of such souvenirs. Many were bought by ordinary citizens purely for ornament. However, there was also a thriving trade in souvenirs at the great party rallies at Nuremberg. In addition, there were specifically party pieces, deliberately archaic in form, which were designed to link the organisations of the Third Reich with ancient Germanic traditions.

Above left: A limited edition Meissen plate produced for members of the Luftwaffe involved in the drive on Moscow in 1941. The plates were hand-painted before firing.

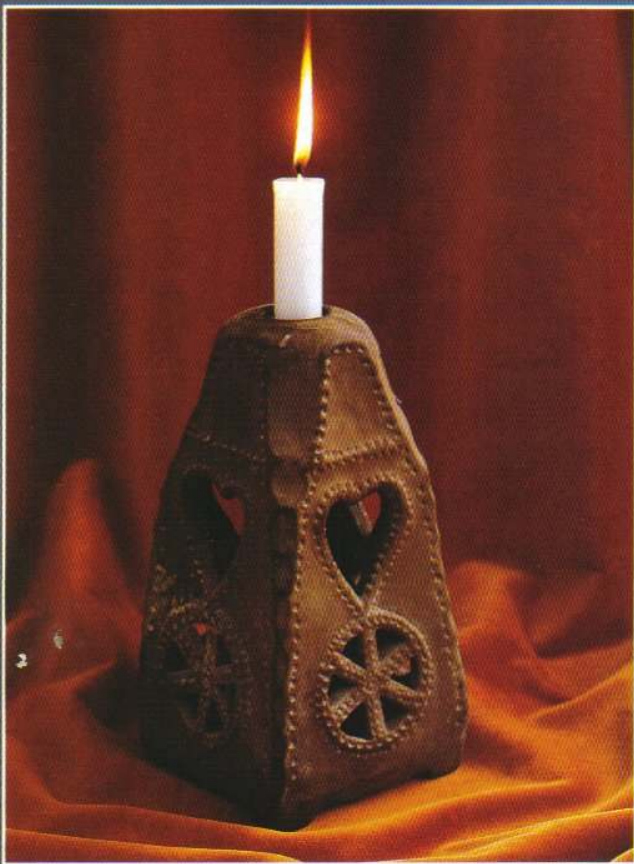
Above centre: A limited edition, hand-painted Rosenthal plate showing Hitler's Berghof retreat on the Obersalzberg at Berchtesgaden. These plates were made from 1933, and this example shows the house as it was before it was extended in the later 1930s.

Above right: A commemorative plate by the old-established firm of Villeroy & Boch. It has a print of the Brown House, the Munich headquarters of the NSDAP, together with a shield bearing the coat of arms of the city of Munich.

Right: An earthenware Julleuchter, or Yule candlestick. Based on archaic pot designs, the Julleuchter were given as gifts to selected SS men by Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler on the occasion of the Winter Solstice, a major festival in the neo-pagan rituals introduced by the SS.

Below left: A Luftwaffe honour goblet, awarded by Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering to Stuka pilot Leutnant Hernert Eichblatt. Such goblets were given to aircrew who showed extreme bravery in the air.

Below right: A mass-produced propaganda piece from the early 1930s, showing a Bavarian SA man and the Party slogan "Deutschland erwache".



A Z

OF THE THIRD REICH

Grynspan, Herschel (1921 - ?)

The 17-year old German Jewish boy who as a protest against Nazi anti-Semitism and the persecution of his family killed diplomat Ernst vom Rath in Paris in November 1938. His act triggered *Kristallnacht* or the Night of Broken Glass. On the night of 9 November 1938, Jewish shops and Synagogues

all over Germany were attacked and damaged or destroyed.

Imprisoned in France, Grynspan was taken by the Germans in 1940, but was never put on trial. His ultimate fate is unknown: there have been reports that he was executed in 1945 or that he survived the war and lived on for many years

under an assumed name. However, he is most likely to have been killed by the Gestapo in 1942 after a period as a special prisoner at Sachsenhausen.

Right: Herschel Grynspan's murder of a diplomat in Paris was the spark which ignited the Kristallnacht pogrom in Germany.



Guderian, Generaloberst Heinz (1888 - 1954)

Possibly the outstanding Panzer commander of World War II, Guderian was born in East Prussia. He was commissioned into the light infantry in 1907 and served as a staff officer in World War I. During the 1920s and 30s he developed Blitzkrieg – the deep penetration armoured tactics that enabled the Wehrmacht to triumph in the first two years of the war.

More than a theoretician, he proved to be an aggressive and capable field commander in Poland, France and in the first months of the invasion of the USSR. However, he was relieved

of his command in 1941 when he withdrew his Panzer Group from Moscow as they came under intense Soviet attack.

Guderian was brought back from retirement in 1943 and made inspector of Armoured Troops. In July 1944 he was promoted Army Chief of Staff and held this post until 22 March, 1945.

Though Guderian was publicly critical of Hitler's operational leadership – he was one of the few officers who would disagree with the dictator to his face – his reputation was sullied by taking part in the Court of Honour which

investigated and convicted the officers suspected of involvement in the 1944 July Plot against Hitler. He had suffered from ill health during the war and died at Schwangau-bei-Fussen in Bavaria on 15 May, 1954.

Right: Guderian was the creator of Blitzkrieg. He was one of the few commanders who would disagree with Hitler to his face.

See also Hitler's Battles

Issue 1: Blitzkrieg Poland
Issue 4: Battle of France
Issue 11: Barbarossa



Gurtner, Franz (1881 - 1941)

Franz Gurtner was an early legal advisor to Hitler who went on to high rank after the Nazis came to power. He had served with distinction in World War I, fighting on the Western Front and in Palestine and winning the Iron Cross first and second class

Gurtner's appointment in Hitler's original cabinet was a payback for loyalty to the Nazis

during the early 1920s. He engineered Hitler's early release from Landsberg where he had been imprisoned after the failure of the Beer Hall Putsch.

Gurtner was appointed Reich Minister of Justice in 1933, where he was responsible for merging older legal institutions into the new Nazi organisations. He appointed all judges, public

prosecutors and law officers. Between 1933 and his death in 1941 he gave a legal justification for the brutal and repressive actions of the government.

Right: Gurtner, a conservative Catholic, knew that the Hitler had no interest in justice. However, as a long-time supporter, he turned a blind eye to Nazi excess.



Hakenkreuz

Despite its modern association with the Nazis, the swastika is far more ancient than Germany itself, and was used as a symbol by cultures from Persia and India to pre-Columbian America. Known as the *hakenkreuz* (hooked cross) or *fylfot*, it is defined in heraldic terms as a 'cross of equal arms with rectangular continuations all

clockwise or all counter clockwise'. It takes its most common name from the sanskrit words *su* meaning 'well' and *asti* meaning 'being'.

In the years of turmoil after the end of World War I, the right-wing Freikorps Ehrhardt painted large white swastikas on their helmets as a distinguishing mark, and the

symbol was picked up by the nascent National Socialists. The Nazi swastika incorporated the red, white and black national colours which were first adopted for the national cockade in 1897 as the symbol of the German Empire.

In its earliest manifestation the Nazi swastika was worn as an

armband on civilian clothes or as part of a political uniform, and the swastika armband also became a regular part of military and paramilitary uniforms.

Under Himmler a department of the SS was formed to conduct spurious archaeological research aimed at proving that the swastika was an 'Aryan' symbol.

Halder, Franz (1884 - 1972)

Chief of the General Staff of the German Army from 1938 to 1942. Halder was a protestant Bavarian from a traditionally military family, who served on the staff of Crown Prince Rupprecht during World War I. Between the wars he specialised in planning and training, and was appointed Chief of the General Staff after the Fritsch affair in 1938.

Halder was the planning expert who brought about the German victories in Poland, France and

the Low Countries and the early successes of Operation Barbarossa in Russia. He was dismissed by Hitler in 1942 after disagreeing about strategy. Implicated in the July Bomb Plot he was sent first to Dachau and then held in solitary confinement in Berlin and at Flossenbürg.

Halder was liberated by the Americans in 1945. In 1949 he stated that without Hitler's interference Germany might not have won the war, but could have

avoided total defeat – in effect Hitler stabbed Germany in the back.

Right: Franz Halder was a highly competent professional soldier who oversaw much of the organisation and planning of the German army's early military triumphs.



See also Hitler's War Machine
Issue 21: The General Staff

Hanfstaengl, Ernst Franz Sedgwick (1887 - 1975)

Of German-American parentage, Hanfstaengl was a Harvard graduate known to one and all as 'Putzi' or 'little fellow' – he was over six-foot four inches tall. He befriended Hitler in Munich in the 1920s, loaning him money and introducing the future dictator to a moneyed social circle in the city. After the collapse of the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923 he hid Hitler from the police. An accomplished piano player with a penchant for

telling jokes, he was the unofficial court jester of the early days of the Nazi movement.

With the rise of the Nazis Hanfstaengl was given a nominal title as Party foreign press secretary, but his lightweight, less than serious attitude was often offensive to senior Nazis like Goering and Goebbels, and it became increasingly clear that his standing was far from firm. In 1937 he fled from Germany when

he heard rumours of plans to kill him in an 'accident'. He lived in the USA and was for a time an advisor to the White House on Nazi affairs. After the war he returned to Germany.

Right: 'Putzi' Hanfstaengl was one of Hitler's early circle of 'society' friends. Well connected, he was also a friend of T.S.Eliot and of Franklin Roosevelt, then a New York Senator.



Haushofer, Karl (1869 - 1946)

Founder of the Institute of Geopolitics. A World War I general, Haushofer was professor of geography at Munich in 1921. His concept of geopolitics asserted that the geographical environment could exert a

political influence. The idea was adopted by Hitler in his ideas of Lebensraum or 'Living Space' for the German people in the East.

Haushofer saw Germany and Britain as co-partners in Europe, and it is believed that he

persuaded Rudolf Hess to fly to Britain in 1941 in an attempt to negotiate peace. Although the Nazis took many of his ideas to heart, he never embraced National Socialism – possibly because his wife was part

Jewish. His son Albrecht was active in the resistance to Hitler, and both were arrested after the 20th of July bomb plot. Albrecht was executed in the last week of the war, and his father committed suicide a year later.

Heil Hitler!

Heil was an old German greeting usually reserved for addressing princes and kings. The new Nazi salutation (officially known as the 'German Greeting') was intended to replace more familiar and traditional greetings such as *Guten tag* or *Gruss Gott*. Classes in school begun with an exchange of 'Heils' between the

teacher and pupils. Along with the verbal greeting went the salute with the extended right arm at an angle of 45 degrees.

Although some Nazis had been using the greeting since before the 1923 Putsch, the first time the salute was used officially was on July 1925 at a parade of 5,000 SA men at Weimar.

Right: A crowd salutes Hitler with the 'German Greeting', and the Führer replies with his own unique variant of the salute.



Heiliger, Max

'Holy Max', the name for the secret bank account for the SS authorised by Reichsbank President Walter Funk. Some of the funding for the SS came from the government, but much more was the product of the vast SS industrial empire managed by the *Wirtschafts-und Verwaltungshauptamt* – the SS-WVHA or

'Administration and Economy Main Office'. This income was subject to no tax. Expenditure suffered very little official oversight, unlike that of the *Waffen* or armed SS which was very tightly controlled.

These untaxed funds from SS industries were increased greatly by a part of the loot taken from

concentration camp victims – primarily coins and items that could be converted into gold bullion.

The first of 76 shipments of loot was delivered to the Reichsbank in 1942 by *Hauptsturmführer* Bruno Memel. It was to be paid in to 'sonderkonto' (special account)

Max Heiliger', which was in fact an account belonging to the SS Revenue Section.

Estimates on the value of gold bars and coins delivered by Memel to the 'Holy Max' account vary between seven and ten million Reichsmarks, much of which ended up in Swiss banks after the war.

Heines, Edmund (1897 - 1934)

Hard-drinking homosexual, close friend of SA leader Ernst Röhm. Heines was a junior officer in World War I. After the war he joined the *Freikorps Rossbach*, and was an early recruit to the Nazi party and to the SA.

Jailed in 1929 for a political murder, he was released in an amnesty. Although Hitler did not like the man, in the 1920s he overlooked his homosexuality, since Heines was adept at the

violence the Führer needed at the time. But as the SA leadership fell out of favour in the 1930s, Heines became critical of Hitler.

On the night of June 30, 1934, the Night of the Long Knives, *Obergruppenführer* Heines was carousing with Röhm and other senior SA men at Bad Wiessee on the shores of the Tegernsee. The party was broken up by Hitler and a small group of SS men, who arrested Röhm and most of

the other SA leadership.

However, Hitler found Heines in bed with his teenaged chauffeur, and on his orders the SA general and his companion were dragged from the room and shot on the spot. They were the first victims of the Blood Purge.

Right: Edmund Heines, shot on the Night of the Long Knives, was a homosexual streetfighter and sometime lover of Ernst Röhm.



Helfershelfer

Also known as H-men; secondary informants working for the *Sicherheitsdienst* or SS security service. Each SD *Ausenstelle* or out-station was responsible for a

Landkreis – a rural district or major town. The *Ausenstelle* was supposed to maintain a network of contact men in each of its districts, and these ran the

informer networks. The contact men were often teachers, local SA leaders, or doctors. Many of the informers were people of dubious character – often small-

time pimps and criminals – but just as many were outwardly respectable citizens. Few of the informers knew that they were actually working for the SD.

Herrenvolk

The concept of the *Herrenvolk* or the 'Master Race' was behind much of Nazi racist philosophy. It held that the 'Aryan' race – Northern Europeans in general and Germans in particular – were gifted with qualities above all other peoples and as a result were destined to rule.

The theory incorporated some of Nietzsche's ideas about the *ubermensch*, or superman. The *ubermensch* would come when traditional society was destroyed; a new aristocracy of individuals

would arise to control the 'herd' which was the rest of humanity.

Aryan theorists were particularly scathing about what they called the *Völkerchaos* (Chaos of Peoples) found around the Mediterranean. Members of the master race were known as *Herrenmensch*, and anyone else was *untermensch*, or sub-human.

Right: Nazi ceremonies were aimed at showing the superiority of the 'Aryan' race over *untermensch* or 'sub-humans'.



Hess, Rudolf (1894- 1987)

Deputy to the Führer and at one time Hitler's appointed successor after Goering. Born in Alexandria, Hess served as an officer in the same regiment as Hitler during World War I before transferring to the air force.

He became a member of the radical right-wing Thule society in Munich after the war. It was there that he met Hitler, becoming his secretary in 1920. While in prison following the Beer Hall Putsch, he took down Hitler's dictation of *Mein Kampf*.

As Hitler's deputy, he played a key role in Party/State affairs in

the 1930s. He was devoted to Hitler but in 1941, in a vain attempt to make peace with Britain, he flew from Augsburg to Scotland in a Messerschmitt Bf 110. Hitler explained the act by saying the Hess had gone mad.

Hess was imprisoned by the British and tried at Nuremberg in 1946. He was found guilty of conspiracy to commit crimes and crimes against peace and condemned to life imprisonment at Spandau Prison. On August 17, 1987 the 93-year old asphyxiated himself using a length of electrical cord (though some

conspiracy theorists hold that he was murdered, or that the man in Spandau was an imposter).

Right: Rudolf Hess became head of the Party's Central Political Committee in December 1932, he was appointed Deputy Führer in 1933 (although Hermann Goering had been nominated as Hitler's successor).

See also Hitler's Henchmen

Issue 9: Rudolf Hess

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 18: Party organisation



"Heute Deutschland! Morgen die Welt!"

The Nazis were particularly adept at creating and using short, catchy propaganda phrases.

They were simple but powerful, and could be used on posters, in speeches or chanted *en masse* at

Party gatherings. "Today Germany! Tomorrow the World!" was a campaigning slogan of the

Nazis in the 1930s, from which opponents of the Nazis might have taken warning.

Heydrich, Reinhard (1904 - 1942)

Head of the SD, the Reich Security Service, Deputy Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia and the driving force behind the establishment of extermination camps and the Final Solution.

A former naval officer dismissed for conduct unbecoming in 1931, Reinhard Tristan Eugen Heydrich was a talented musician and sportsman. Using his wife's contacts, he joined the Nazi Party almost immediately. Appointed by Himmler to run the Party's tiny security service, Heydrich proved to be one of the most cruel, ambitious and ruthless men in

the Nazi Party and the Reich. By the outbreak of war he had gained control of nearly every party and state security body.

In 1941 Heydrich was appointed to rule Bohemia and Moravia, but he still found the time to chair the Wannsee conference in January 1942. Here, he ironed out the plan to exterminate Europe's Jews. He never got the chance to see his plans in action, however, since he was killed by a team of British-trained Czech agents who ambushed his car in Prague.

He was the only senior Nazi to be killed by direct action and following orders from Hitler a

cruel revenge was exacted on Czech individuals and communities that were suspected of involvement with the attack, a revenge that included the total destruction of the town of Lidice.

Right: One of the most able men in the Nazi hierarchy, Reinhard Heydrich was also one of the most amoral, with a capacity for brutality which made him the most feared man in Europe.

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 3: Gestapo

See also Hitler's Henchmen

Issue 2: Reinhard Heydrich



Hilferding, Rudolf (1877 - 1941)

Austrian-born German Social Democrat theorist and editor. He was the SPD Minister of Finance in 1923 and from 1928-29, elected to the Reichstag in 1924.

As a Jewish Marxist Hilferding knew he would be a prime target for the Nazis once they came to power, and in March 1933 he fled to Denmark. From here he moved

to Switzerland and then France. In 1934 he wrote the 'Prague Programme', a policy for the SPD in exile.

In 1941 Hilferding was arrested by the French police in Vichy France and handed over to the Germans. He died at the hands of the Gestapo in a Paris prison a few days later.

Right: A caricature dating from 1931, depicting Rudolf Hilferding as 'Der Fachmann für Inflation' or 'The inflation specialist'. Although his reputation rested on Das Finanzkapital, a scholarly work written in 1910, Nazis and other right-wingers considered him responsible for many of Germany's economic woes.



Hilfswillige

Literally 'Willing helpers' and often known as 'Hiwis', *Hilfswillige* were civilians and soldiers from the non-Russian republics of the Soviet Union who worked with the Germans on the Eastern Front.

Some chose to fight alongside the Germans out of a hatred for Moscow-based Communism, while others went along simply to avoid being shot or imprisoned. Many of the worst

atrocities carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen* in 1941 and 1942 were in fact committed by Baltic or Ukrainian volunteers.

Right: Turkestan volunteers, former Red Army soldiers, man a German machine gun post on the Eastern Front in 1943.

See also The Holocaust

Issue 3: Einsatzgruppen



Himmler, Heinrich (1900 - 1945)

Reichsführer-SS and head of the German police. Born into a religious middle-class Bavarian family, Himmler joined the army at the end of World War I, but was too late to see action. He became involved in right-wing politics in Munich after the war, where he met Hitler and took part in the Beer Hall Putsch.

Himmler became head of the SS in 1929, and in a decade was to take it from being a small bodyguard formation into an immensely powerful state-within-a-state. Having gained control of the police and the security forces

in the 1930s, the mild-seeming Himmler was one of the most feared men in the Third Reich. He was one of the few Nazi leaders to speak publicly about implementing the Final Solution, and it was Himmler's SS which carried it out.

Himmler was a mystic, fascinated by a mythical version of German history and the Aryan master race. At the end of the war he finally lost faith with his Führer and advocated making peace with the Allies - at which Hitler ordered his arrest. He was captured attempting to slip

Right: Heinrich Himmler was something of a crackpot, but at the same time he was a competent bureaucrat with an appetite for power at odds with his mild appearance.

through British lines in disguise and when his identity was established he swallowed a cyanide capsule.

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 7: The SS State

See also Hitler's Henchmen

Issue 4: Heinrich Himmler



Hindenburg, Paul v. Beckendorff und v. (1847- 1934)

Field Marshal and politician, who had been the Kaiser's senior military commander and was virtual dictator of Germany in the final years of World War I. Persuaded to enter politics after the war ended, he was elected second President of the Weimar Republic in April 1925.

A veteran of every German war since the conflict with Austria in 1866, the aristocratic old Prussian warrior had little time for the plebeian Austrian Hitler. But Nazi poll success in the 1930s meant that he had to work with him.

By the time the Nazis were gaining control of the state the elderly and ailing Hindenburg was losing his grip on events. On 30 January 1933 von Hindenburg made Hitler Chancellor. It was a constitutionally legal move, since Hitler controlled the largest party in the Reichstag (though he was far from holding a majority).

For Hitler, von Hindenburg was a useful asset since by his endorsement he gave the Nazis a respectability in the eyes of ordinary Germans. But he was also a threat to the Führer's

plans, since the Field Marshal still had absolute control of the army. And the army was the only force in the Germany of the 1930s strong enough to have stopped the Nazis in their tracks. Hitler had to wait for von Hindenburg's death before the Army could be dealt with.

Right: There is some evidence that President von Hindenburg knew the danger of the Nazis, but felt that the Army would prove an adequate counterbalance to Hitler's ambitions.



Hitler, Adolf (1889 - 1945)

Born at Braunau-am-Inn, Adolf Hitler was a clever but indolent and self-centred child. As an idle young man in Vienna, and later in Munich, he scratched a living as an artist. He served with some distinction on the Western Front, being decorated for bravery several times.

Embittered after Germany's defeat, he returned to Munich where he discovered a talent for oratory and a ready audience for his extreme nationalist political views. In 1919, Hitler joined the tiny German Worker's Party, taking control and turning it into

the National Socialist German Worker's Party.

A man of demonic gifts and mesmerising character, Hitler spent the next decade building a power base which would eventually give him effective control of the Reichstag. After being appointed Chancellor in 1933, he manipulated the political system to achieve total power. He used that power to re-arm Germany and to conduct an aggressive, acquisitive foreign policy.

Hitler led Germany into what he thought would be a small

European war, but which was to become World War II, the most costly and destructive conflict in history. It was a war which saw the Nazis commit the most horrifying crimes in history.

As Germany fell into inevitable ruin, beset on all sides by the world's great powers, Adolf Hitler retired to the Führerbunker in Berlin, where he committed suicide on 30 April 1945.

Right: Accompanied by his favourite dog, Blondi, an off-duty Hitler relaxes during a walk in the Bavarian Alps.



Hitler, Alois (1837 - 1903)

Adolf Hitler's father. Born the illegitimate son of Maria Schickelgruber, a peasant from the Waldviertel district of Austria, he trained as a cobbler. However, the young Alois Schickelgruber managed to overcome his poor background, joining the Austrian customs service. He retired in 1895 after 40 years of service. He died of a heart attack in 1903.

In 1877, as he was coming up for promotion to senior assistant

inspector of customs, he adopted the name of his supposed father, Johann Georg Heidler, who had been dead for 30 years. However, because of an error by the priest who amended the birth records, the name was spelt Hitler.

Alois was married three times, his third wife being his second cousin, Klara Poelzl. A "vigorous, opinionated, bullet-headed man", Alois Hitler was a hard-working man who provided his family

with a good middle-class home.

Hitler later depicted him as a violent drunk, but the son never got on with the father. Alois was indeed a stern father, but probably no more so than most parents of the time.

Right: Alois Hitler was a man with a quick and violent temper and an overbearing attitude to subordinates, characteristics he passed on to his son Adolf.



Hitler, Klara Poelzl (1860 - 1908)

Hitler's mother, and Alois Hitler's third wife. Klara was 23 years younger than her husband, who she called 'uncle' in the early years of marriage. She bore six children, only two of whom survived: Adolf, born in 1889, and his sister Paula, born in 1896.

Klara was devoted to her son, who she indulged to a great extent, and the affection was reciprocated. Adolf was very much a mother's boy: he did not

get on with his domineering and ageing father.

A devout Catholic, Klara hoped that Adolf would become a monk, even though she once described him as 'moonstruck'. After Alois Hitler retired in 1895, the family moved to Leonding near Linz, where Adolf dropped out of school after his father's death. Klara died of cancer in December 1908, after a painful and lingering illness.

Right: Klara Poelzl was Alois Hitler's cousin as well as his wife. She was devoted to their only surviving son, and in turn he was devoted to her. Adolf's description of his mother, recorded in Mein Kampf, idolises Klara as a loving and caring housewife.

See also Secret Hitler Files

Issue 5: Hitler's Early Life

Issue 8: Hitler's Women



COMING IN THE NEXT VOLUMES OF **HITLER'S** Third Reich

SECRET HITLER FILES

Hitler: a Psychological
Profile



THE HOLOCAUST

Ravensbrück:
The Woman's Camp



HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Martin Bormann
Rudolf Hess

HITLER'S BATTLES 9

Battle of the Atlantic

INSIDE THE REICH

Hitler Youth:
Creating a Nazi Future



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Early Panzers
Infantry weapons
Battleships

NAZI HORRORS

The destruction of Lidice
Life and death in the camps
Eugenics and Euthanasia

NAZI SYMBOLS

Party Medals and Orders

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

Strength Through Joy



A-TO-Z OF THE THIRD REICH



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Hitler had an inexplicable attraction for women. But who were the women in his life, and how did he treat them?

HOLOCAUST

Europe's Jews had long been familiar with anti-Semitism, but nothing could prepare them for what the Nazis planned

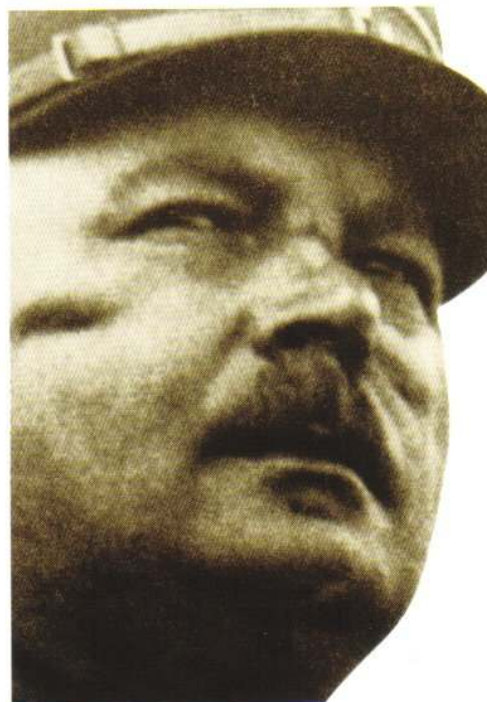
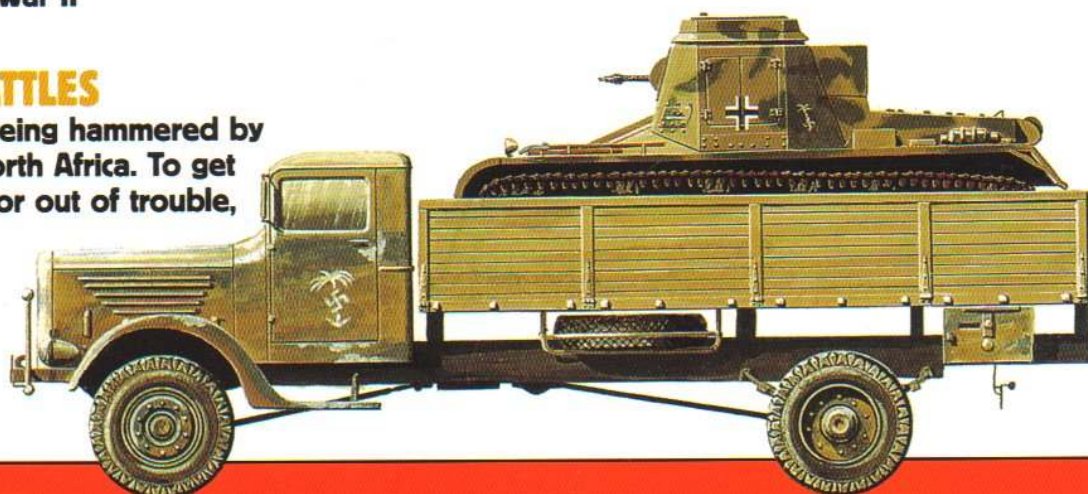


HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Massive Soviet tank armies drove the Wehrmacht to develop and use the most powerful anti-tank guns of World War II

HITLER'S BATTLES

Mussolini was being hammered by the British in North Africa. To get his fellow dictator out of trouble, Hitler sent the Afrika Korps – and a general called Rommel

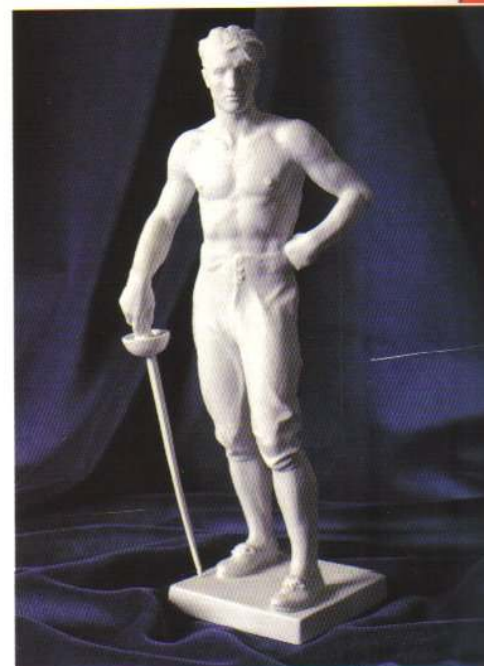


INSIDE THE THIRD REICH: HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Ernst Röhm was one of Hitler's oldest and closest comrades. But he made the mistake of getting too powerful – so his old friend had him shot.

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

Native German speakers all over the world saw themselves as *Volksdeutsch* and part of the Third Reich



NAZI PORCELAIN

Great craftsmanship – manufactured by the SS!